KEN SHAMROCK'S QUEST TO BRING RESPECT BACK TO THE WWF

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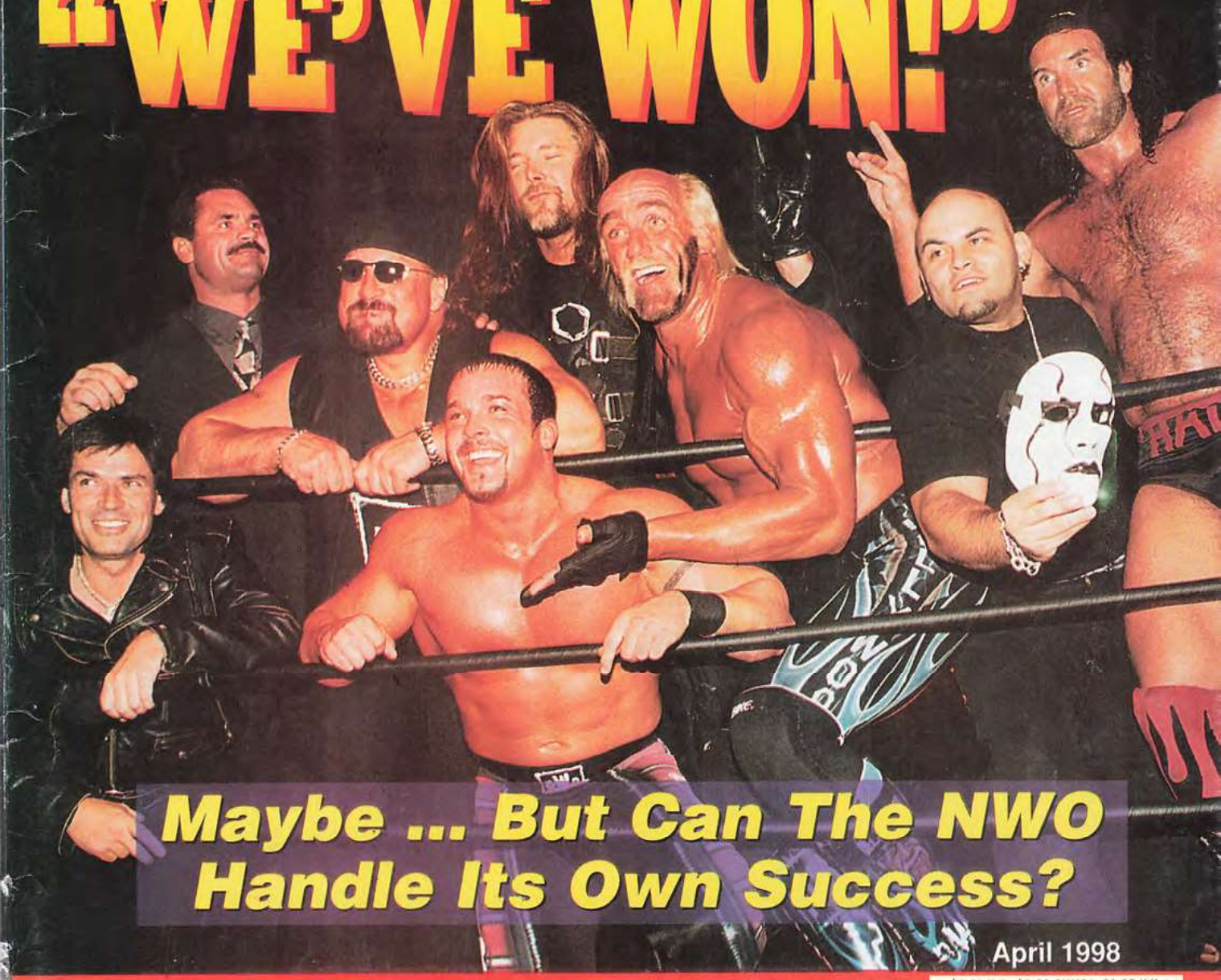

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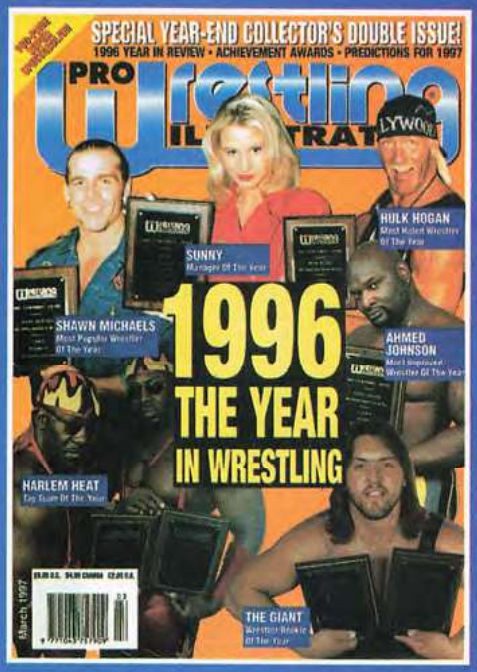

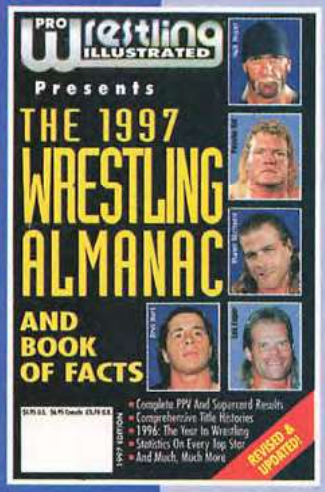

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APRIL 1998

THE Wrestler

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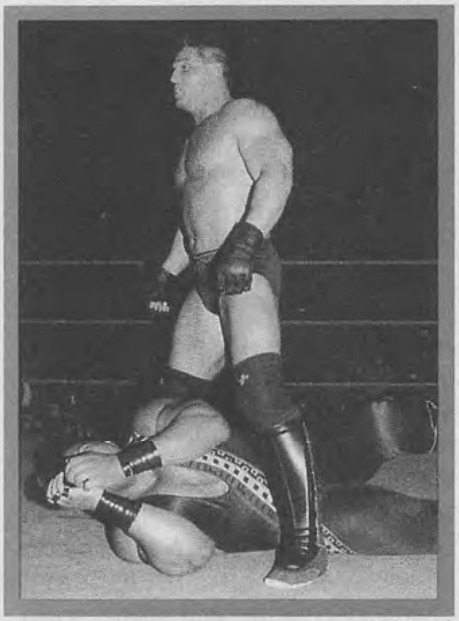

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YOUR Letters

STONE-RUDE?

What is Steve Austin's problem? Why won't he wrestle Rocky Maivia again? If "Stone-Cold" is so sure he could whip Maivia again (I'm not sure he could), why doesn't he just give Maivia a rematch and end all the controversy once and for all?

Maybe some fans thought it was cool when Austin threw the I-C belt in the river, but I though it was very disrespectful to the organization he represents. Just because he wants to win the WWF World heavyweight belt doesn't mean the I-C belt isn't prestigious. Austin is a very rude man. He's always using bad language and disrespecting other wrestlers. Vince McMahon should leave Owen Hart alone and come down harder on Steve Austin!

JUSTIN WEINER
Bryn Mawr, PA

JACKIE'S GONE

There's an old saying that goes: "Drop that zero and get with a hero." That's what Harlem Heat did to Jacquelyn, and I'm glad. She never gave Stevie Ray and Booker T the guidance they were looking for. They are one of the best tag teams around, and they might be WCW tag team champs today if they had a good manager. The last thing they needed was her dead weight. So, Harlem Heat, please, if you can't get Sherri Martel back, then take care of business yourselves. Get those belts back soon!

ARTIS M. OWENS
Ozark, AL

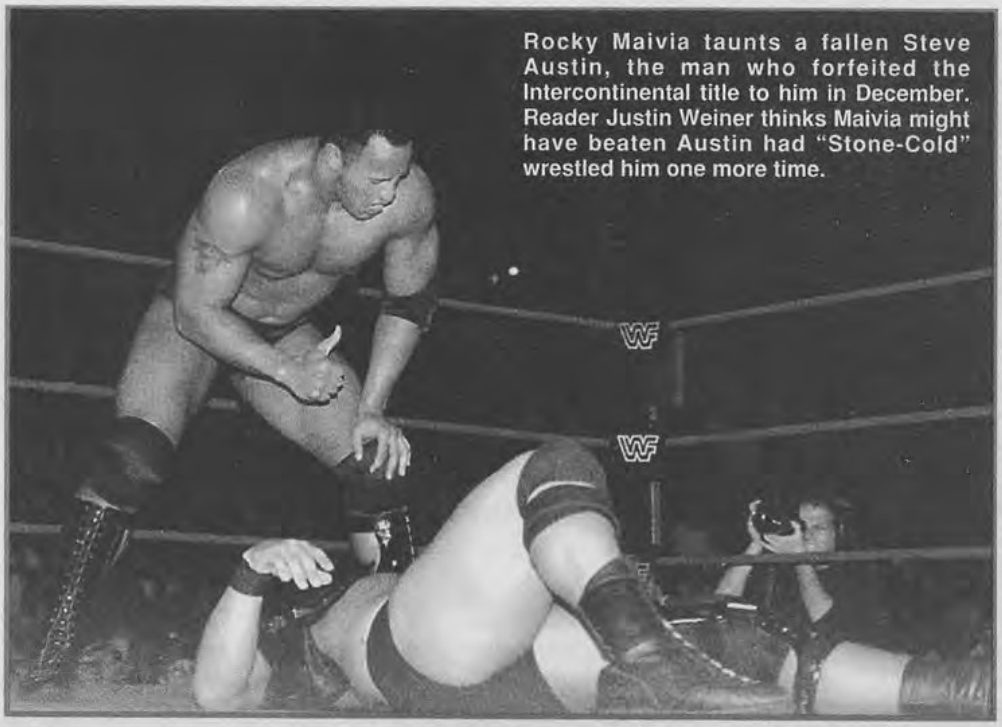
The relationship between Harlem Heat and Jacquelyn has officially ended. Reader Artis M. Owens thinks Stevie Ray and Booker T will be better off without her.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

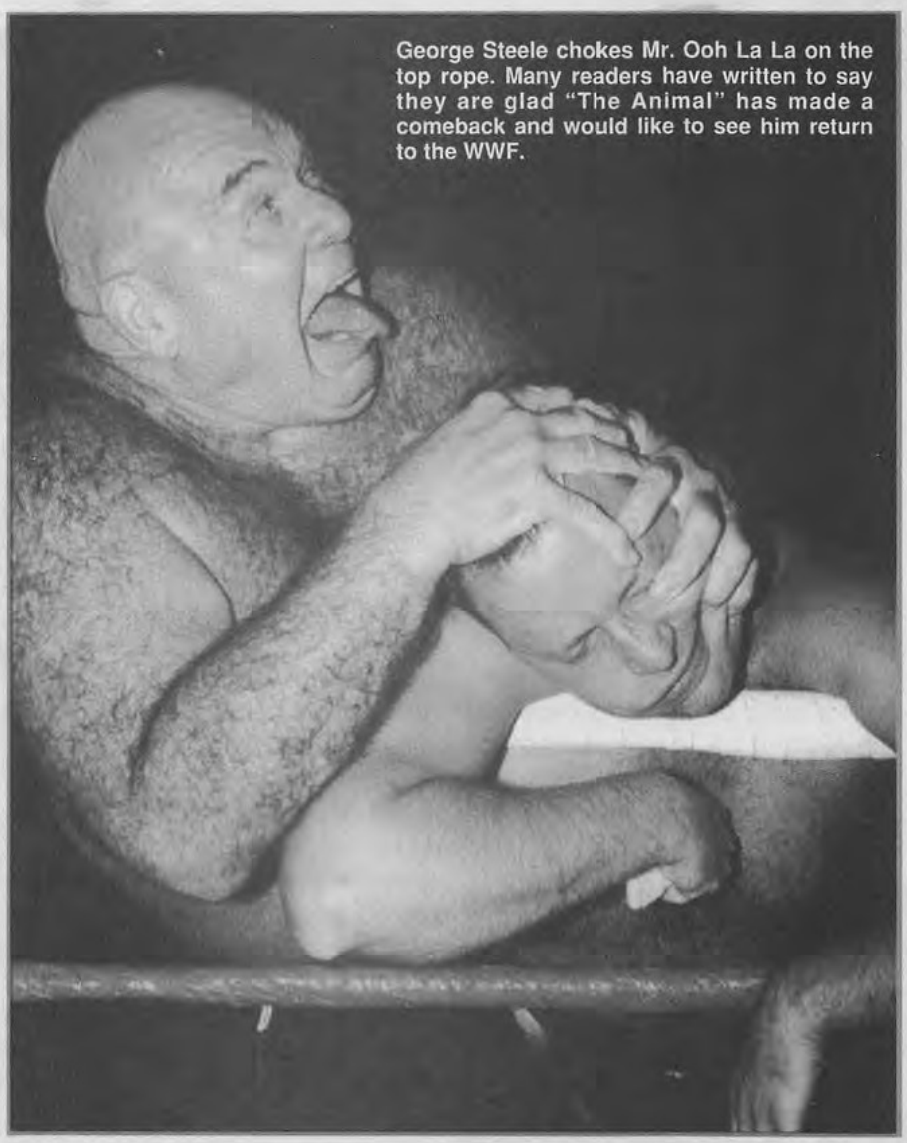
I enjoyed your profile on George "The Animal" Steele ("Spotlight," January 1998). I was also shocked to see that he still looks the same after all these years.

Although he is best known by fans as the bald, hairy guy who likes to chew up turnbuckles and flash his green tongue, Steele is actually one of the toughest legends of all-time. Classic feuds with The Sheik, Bruno Sammartino, Gorilla Monsoon, and Bob Backlund were more than enough to get him inducted into the WWF Hall of Fame. My best memory of Steele is when he dominated Randy Savage with his raw power. I still believe Steele could have won the I-C title if he had been just a little more focused.

As for his comeback, why not? If veterans like Terry Funk, Abdullah the



Rocky Maivia taunts a fallen Steve Austin, the man who forfeited the Intercontinental title to him in December. Reader Justin Weiner thinks Maivia might have beaten Austin had "Stone-Cold" wrestled him one more time.



George Steele chokes Mr. Ooh La La on the top rope. Many readers have written to say they are glad "The Animal" has made a comeback and would like to see him return to the WWF.

Butcher, and Greg Valentine can still compete, "The Animal" may as well, too.

STEVE NARDI
West Berlin, NJ

What a thrill it was to see "The Animal" back in the "Spotlight." Even people who didn't enjoy wrestling used to pause to watch George Steele stumble around the ring or eat the stuffing out of the turnbuckle.

I hadn't realized how popular the feud with Savage made him. It's funny to hear my son talk about Steele when I can remember watching the man during my childhood. The fact that Steele hasn't changed a bit in 30 years shows that he is truly one of wrestling's greatest characters. I hope he can get off the independent circuit and back into the WWF, where we can see him on a regular basis.

ALEXANDER RIGOLIZZO
Northwood, CA

FOOT FETISH?

Let me take my wrestling hat off to the beautiful Beulah McGillicutty for cutting up big-mouth Bill Alfonso with that cookie cutter. She gives new meaning to the term "foreign object."

Although I like McGillicutty. I wish she would wrestle other ladies more often and wrestle barefoot to prove how tough she really is. If ECW had a women's division, maybe the ladies wouldn't interfere in the men's matches so often. Let's have real

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The Wrestler

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PUBLISHER ..... Stuart M. Saks

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF ..... David Lenker

SENIOR EDITOR ..... Bill Apter

MANAGING EDITOR ..... Brandi Mankiewicz

ASSOCIATE EDITORS ..... Frank Krewda
Eric Raskin

SENIOR ART DIRECTOR ..... Wendy Vetter

ART ASSOCIATES ..... Joseph Kalman
Alex Krasnopolsky
Walt Schmidt
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SENIOR WRITERS ..... David Rosenbaum
Andy Rodriguez
Bryan Ethier
Steve Anderson
Harry Burkett
Dan Murphy

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR ..... Ron Frankhouser

PRODUCTION ASSOCIATES ..... Cliff Campo
Kelly Flum

PHOTO EDITOR ..... Frank Vitucci

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS ..... Matt Brock
Elizabeth A. Hunter
Craig Peters

VICE PRESIDENT MARKETING
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Robert Nucci

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Sharon Liggio
(215) 643-6385

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WHAT'S Happening

By Bill Apter

THE NWO'S HOSTILE takeover of *WCW Monday Nitro* six days before Starrcade took a lot of people by surprise, not the least of whom were all the production people and technicians who work so hard to bring you *Nitro* every week, but I found out the day after that there was a lot more to the takeover than we saw on TV.

"A few of those NWO guys started bullying around some of the TNT executives hours before we went on the air," said veteran cameraman **Jackie Crockett**. According to Crockett, he was told to either declare his allegiance to the NWO or risk losing his job. "I knew something like this was going to happen because I saw them in the WCW offices even earlier in the day. They were telling some of the executives that they would be losing their office space soon and to start cleaning out their desks. Some of them actually did it.

Eric Bischoff and Hulk Hogan led the NWO's hostile takeover of *Monday Nitro* six days before Starrcade. That takeover actually started before *Nitro* went on the air, and J.J. Dillon did nothing about it.

"The NWO guys really had them terrified. They looked like they would have done anything the NWO told them to do. Hell, I did. I have a family to take care of. I need the money. If it means keeping my job, I guess I'm NWO for life."

J.J. Dillon, chairman of the WCW Executive Committee, is livid over what took place.

"I'm flabbergasted, shocked ... I just don't know what to say," he told me. "Many of the WCW wrestlers left the arena when the NWO began tearing down the WCW set. I can't fault them for doing that. It is very unfortunate that we allowed them to bully us like that. I don't know what more to say."

I have a lot of respect for J.J. Dillon, but I think he made a huge mistake when he did nothing to stop the NWO on December 22. He essentially told the NWO that WCW can be bullied.

Most of us got a good laugh when **Steve Austin** tossed the WWF Intercontinental belt off a bridge in New Hampshire instead of handing it over to **Rocky Maivia**, the man to whom he had forfeited the title. WWF Commissioner **Sgt. Slaughter** was *not* among those who was amused.

"That gold championship belt is the property of the World Wrestling Federation," Slaughter said. "On one hand, I am inclined to fine and/or suspend Austin for his highly disrespectful actions. However, I have decided not to do that. I do not

It looks like Steve Austin (above left) is through putting scares into Rocky Maivia (above right). But the WWF has not forgotten that Austin threw Maivia's Intercontinental belt into a river. He'll pay for that—literally.

condone what Mr. Austin did, but I have told him that he will be responsible for paying whatever it costs for the WWF to retrieve or replace the belt [the WWF declined to release the dollar value of the belt]. If payment is not received immediately, I have been told by **Vince McMahon** that the amount will be deducted from his paycheck."

Austin's retort: "I ain't payin' nobody back. I did them a favor by tossin' that worthless hunk of tin into the river. Take money out of my paycheck? Hell, McMahon won't do that, 'cause he knows what the damn consequences would be! No, I won't hurt the poor guy this time. I'll just walk out of the WWF and they'll lose their biggest attraction."

Sensational WWF light heavyweight champion **Taka Michinoku** has given up the Japanese Independent World junior heavyweight because of his heavy WWF schedule. He said he doesn't think it would be right if he were only able to defend it once every month or two ... **The Road Warriors** have taken a self-imposed hiatus from the WWF, and **Hawk** tells us that they will be stronger than ever when they return.

"Hell, we're putting **DeGeneration X**, **Billy Gunn**, and that **'Road Dog'** all on notice. When you shaved my head and tried to cripple Animal, you guys went too damn far! We should thank you, because you made us realize that we need to get even more violent and more reckless than we've been.

"And I ain't forgotten what **Kane** did to me, either. He'll need a few pallbearers when I get done with him!"

Stevie Richards was preparing to undergo fusion neck surgery at press time. The surgery could result in him losing at least 40 percent loss of mobility in his neck, so Richards knows his career is over.

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Steve Anderson's View

No Holds Barred

with Steve Anderson

ONE OF MY most vivid memories as a wrestling fan is the night I first saw The Road Warriors wrestle. I can't quite remember who their opponents were, but I remember that they did not fare too well against Animal and Hawk.

I also recall that from that moment on, my view of tag teams changed. The measuring stick was held by those two hellraisers from Chicago.

That was close to 15 years ago.

Fifteen years is a long time.

When The Legion of Doom returned to WCW in 1996 and then the WWF in 1997, they just weren't the same. That was obvious to me. It wasn't age. It wasn't talent. It's just that they had become merely another tag team in a division that has suffered from a lack of quality for several years. The once-innovative tag team of the '80s had become an ordinary duo in the '90s.

Even though they won their second WWF World tag tam title a few months back, that reign, like others, was short. And it was ended by "Road Dog" Jesse James and Billy Gunn (The New Age Outlaws) of all people. That was a major turning point for the LOD. So was the night DeGeneration X and The New Age Outlaws attacked the duo, leaving Animal's back injured and Hawk's head totally shaved.

The Road Warriors won't likely be sporting an entirely new look anytime in 1998, but Hawk and Animal insist you will notice a change in the way they do things.

I had scheduled an interview with the Roadies long before that incident. I had no idea that I would be speaking with the two one day after the most humiliating incident of their career. And I can tell you that it changed Animal and Hawk in a dramatic way that you might not appreciate.

I was to meet Hawk and Animal in the restaurant of the hotel in which they were staying. I waited for more than an hour, but still there was no sign of them, so I paid for the three Cokes that I had consumed and quickly made my exit through the lobby. Making notes on my steno pad, I paid little heed to the figure directly in front of me.

Suddenly, I fell down in a heap, feeling like I had hit a brick wall. I looked up and noticed it wasn't a wall. It was Hawk ... and Animal.

"Anderson!" Hawk growled. "Why don't you watch where you're going?"

"Hawk ... Animal," I said. "Where have you guys been? I've

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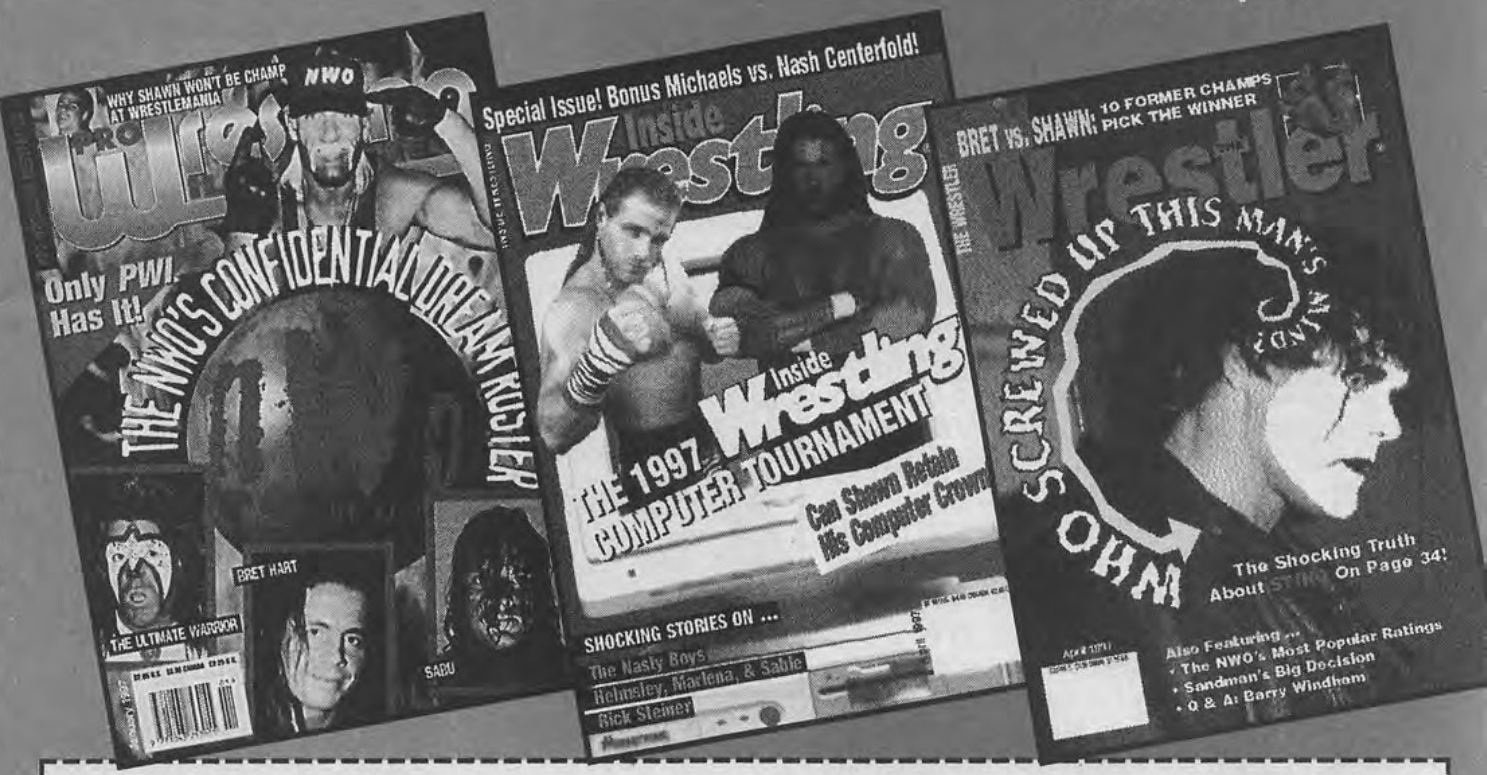

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Biased

By Andy Rodriguez

WHAT VINCE McMAHON has been doing lately, when you really think about it, is being himself. McMahon always did seem the type who enjoyed confrontation. Recall the pugnacious interviews he has conducted with WWF stars past and present.

So McMahon's recent showdowns on *Raw Is War* should not have been that surprising. What is surprising is the way WWF wrestlers are reacting to him. They don't seem to feel the least bit threatened by their boss. They are more contemptuous.

Maybe Steve Austin isn't a good example of that, because he's crazy anyway. It takes a certain strange kind of guy to have the guts to attack the head of the federation in public and on live TV. Austin can't be expected to have any respect for authority.

When Owen Hart confronted McMahon in the ring in December, he didn't end up smacking him. But he did skulk away with a body language that read, *I'll be back, McMahon, and then you'll regret it!*

Vince is getting tough

Of course, Owen had to be feeling a lot of anger about the way his brother Bret left the WWF. His brother was so upset at the way he lost the World title to Shawn Michaels that he spit in McMahon's face after the bout and attacked him later in the locker room.

Owen is loyal to the WWF, but he's more loyal to his family. He had to let McMahon know that.

There was a time in which WWF athletes ticked off at the big guy had to focus their aggressions elsewhere. McMahon has always been the boss behind the scenes, but he also was always content to let people like Jack Tunney make executive decisions about what went on in the ring. There were suspicions that it really was McMahon making the decisions, but Tunney was the one who took the heat, while McMahon played his role as a broadcaster.

Now McMahon has come out from behind the microphone with the intention of finally letting everyone to know he is the man in charge and that he won't take any guff from anybody.

The fans, at least, are listening to him, if only because he's livened things up. There's a game going on: Who's going to attack Vince this week? It's the new amusement.

Wrestlers aren't amused, though. A lot of them think McMahon is trying to hog the spotlight, trying to be one of the guys, as it were. They wish he'd leave the one-on-ones with wrestlers to Sgt. Slaughter and start simply calling matches again.

"I could deal with him well enough in the offices," one wrestler said, "but when he gets in the ring, I just feel like that isn't where he belongs."

It may have been where he belonged 10 years ago. McMahon has always kept himself in outstanding shape, and with some serious training, he probably could have competed. But now he is 52, and while there are a handful of men that age still donning the tights on occasion, McMahon must realize that stepping through the ropes is no longer an option. He does seem to think, though, that it's okay to get in the ring and stir up trouble.

If he thinks by getting tougher with his wrestlers, he can restore a little order to his federation, well, he ought to think again. Through most of 1997, he let Austin and others push him around and just sat there and listened as a half-dozen others viciously criticized him for mishandling their careers. He took no disciplinary action against them. It won't be easy for him to get any wrestler to take his threats seriously now.

That's because wrestlers today are more aggressive. They're more willing to take on authority. McMahon feels he can't meet that challenge by sitting behind a desk or at ringside. He has to confront them where they live. It would have been nice if he felt that way six months or a year ago, before things got totally out of hand.

Indeed, McMahon has entered the war zone. And he's finding that it's a war he can't fight on his own terms, even though it is his federation. It's doubtful anyone else will be stupid enough to do what Austin did, but there are a lot of wrestlers in the WWF who refuse to allow McMahon the last word. □

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ECW TV 17 Sandman vs. Cactus (Barbed Wire Match), Sandman vs. Shane Douglas, Beulah vs. Luna Vachon, Public Enemy vs. Pitbulls, and the ECW debut of the Gangstas.

ECW TV 18 Raven and Richards beating Public Enemy for the Tag Titles, Taz vs. 2 Cold Scorpio, Taz and Eddy Guerrero vs. Melanie and Scorpio (twice), Cactus and Dreamer and Pitbulls vs. Raven and Richards and Dudleys. Cactus and Melanie and Scorpio vs. Steiner and Guerrero, Public Enemy vs. Gangstas.

ECW TV 20 Melanie vs. Guerrero (Final ECW Match), Francine vs. Beulah (Cat Fight), Raven and Richards vs. Pitbulls, Steiners vs. Scorpio and Benoit, Raven and Richards vs. Pitbulls (Double Dog Collar Match).

ECW TV 21 Steiner and Taz vs. Eliminators and Scorpio, Steve Austin imitating Hulk Hogan, Rey Misterio Jr. Vs. Psicosis (twice), Public Enemy and Mikey vs. Sandman and Scorpio and New Jack (Cage Match).

ECW TV 22 Public Enemy vs. Gangstas, Taz and Rick Steiners vs. Eliminators. Cactus vs. Dreamer, Misterio Jr. and Konnan vs. LaParka and Psicosis, Sandman vs. Mikey.

ECW TV 23 Cactus and Raven vs. Dreamer and Funk, Heavenly Bodies debut in ECW, Konnan vs. Jason, Mikey vs. Misterio Jr., Steve Austin vs. Mikey (twice), Sabu return to ECW.

ECW TV 24 Steve Austin and Mikey and Sandman (3 way dance), Misterio Jr. Vs. Psicosis (Mexican Death Match), Raven vs. Dreamer, Public Enemy vs. Heavenly Bodies, Shane Douglas returns to ECW.

ECW TV 25 Eliminators vs. 911 and Rey Misterio Jr., Konnan vs. Sandman (Bloodbath), Sabu vs. Steve Richards, Rob Van Dam vs. Axl Rotten, Scorpio vs. Mikey, Sabu vs. Van Dam, Misterio Jr. vs. Juventud Guerrera, Headhunters return, Sandman vs. Raven.

ECW TV 26 Raven and Richards vs. Dreamer and Douglas, Brian Pillman debuts in ECW. Headhunters vs. Bruise Brothers, Raven vs. Douglas (Pillman runs in). Sabu vs. Scorpio, Eliminators and Richards vs. Pitbulls and Francine (Triple Dog Collar Match).

ECW TV 27 Headhunters vs. Gangstas, Cactus vs. Chris Jericho, Misterio Jr. vs. Guerrera (2 matches), Cactus vs. Mikey (Cactus' last ECW match). Gangstas - Eliminators Brawl)

ECW TV 28 Raven and Bruise Brothers vs. Dreamer, Douglas and Sandman. Sabu vs. Mikey, Taz vs. Jericho, Pitbulls and Dreamer vs. Bruises and lee, Dreamer vs. Lee, Raven vs. Douglas.

ECW TV 29 Sabu vs VanDam, Douglas vs. Scorpio, Taz vs. Scorpio, Jericho vs. Mikey, Jericho vs. Scorpio, Eliminators and Lee vs. Dreamer and Gangstas.

ECW TV 30 Brian Lee and Bruise Brothers vs. Dreamer and Pitbulls, Raven vs. Pitbull 2, VanDam vs. Mikey, Douglas vs. Pitbull 2, Sandman vs Richards.

ECW TV 31 Jericho vs. Pitbull #2, Dreamer vs. Lee (Weapons Match), Gangstas vs. Eliminators, Sabu vs. VanDam, Eliminators vs. Sabu and Mikey, Jerico vs. Douglas vs. Pitbull #2 vs. Scorpio (4 Way Dance).

ECW TV 32 Sabu vs. Louie Spicolli, Sandman vs. Richards, Eliminators vs. Okano and Yamada, Dreamer vs. Raven from Japan, Shane Douglas vs. Pitbull #2, and a 4-way dance for the Tag Titles.

ECW TV 33 Doug urnas vs. VanDam, Taz vs. Dreamer, Lee vs. Terry Gordy (Bad Street Match), Dudley vs. Axl and D-von Dudley.

ECW TV 34 Sabu and VanDam vs. Furnas and Kroffat (30 minute draw) Taz vs. Johnny Smith, Eliminators and Lee vs. Dreamer and Gordy and Steve Williams, Douglas vs. Pitbull #2, Lee and Richards vs. Dreamer and Sandman (Ultimate Jeopardy).

ECW TV 35 Jericho vs. Scorpio, Eliminators vs. Gangstas, Taz vs. Guido (Shoot Fight), Sandman vs. Scorpio, Douglas vs. Dreamer, Sabu and VanDam vs. Kroffat and Furnas.

ECW TV 36 ECW Royal Rumble, Douglas and Francine vs. Dreamer and Beulah, Taz vs. VanDam, Raven vs. Mikey, Raven v. Sandman, Candito vs. VanDam.

ECW TV 37 Gangstas vs. Morton and Rich, Raven vs. Sandman (Texas Death Match), Raven vs. Sandman (Hair vs. Belt), Raven vs. Steve Williams, Funk vs. Brian Lee.

ECW TV 38 Funk vs. Tommy Rich, Sabu and VanDam vs. Eliminators (Tables and Ladders), Dudleys vs. Gangstas, Funk and Dreamer vs Lee and Raven, Lance Storm vs. Balls Mahoney.

ECW TV 39 Taz vs. VanDam, Funk vs. Brian Lee, Balls vs. Sandman (Twice), Funk vs. Axl Rotten, Sabu vs. Spike Dudley, Raven and Shane vs. Dreamer and Funk, Great Sasuke and Hamada and nanina vs Taka and Men's Tech and Dick Togo (Michinoku Pro G-Man).

ECW TV 40 Preview of "Barely Legal", Eliminators vs. Dudleys vs. Gangstas (3 Way Dance), Video clips of "Barely Legal", Rob Van Dam vs. Pitbull #2, and the Evolution of Mr. Monday Night.

ECW TV 41 Gangstas vs. Dudleys vs. Eliminators (3 Way Dance), Bam Bam Bigelows return to ECW, Rude's debut as TV commentator, Sabu and Van Dam vs. Taz and Candito, Dreamer vs. Spicolli, Sandman vs. Balls, Raven and Richards vs. Funk and Dreamer.

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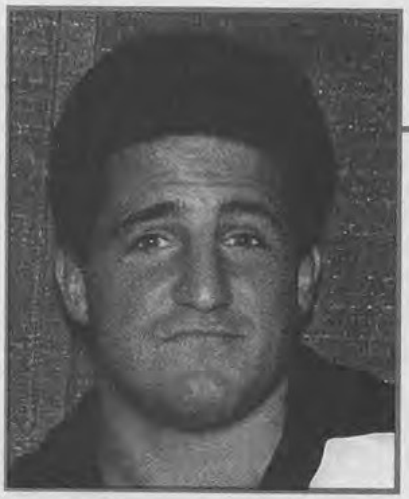
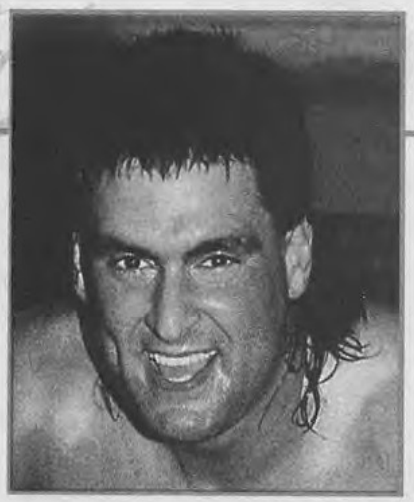
THUMBS UP

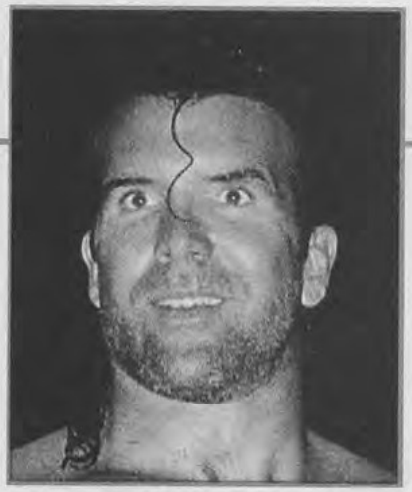


Thumbs Up to Disco Inferno. Burn, baby, burn. The WCW TV champion is a new wrestler: more intense, more talented, more determined than ever. Clearly angrier, too. Disco Inferno—who still must deal with those infernal taunts from WCW fans—scored a clean victory over Perry Saturn for the title and no longer must hear about his embarrassing loss to Jacquelyn. Okay, so maybe he will hear about that for a while. But the victory over Saturn was impressive and made us reconsider our evaluation of Inferno. Maybe he's more than just a bad dancer. Maybe he's a talented athlete with a solid future.



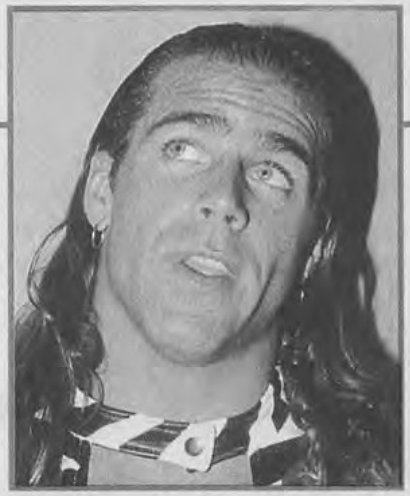
Thumbs Up to Tom Brandi. Tom Brandi? Yes, Tom Brandi. The former Johnny Gunn has been Sable's knight in shining armor in her troubles with Marc Mero. Let's face it, Mero is a mean man. It goes beyond his opinions about Sable's skimpy outfits; he wants to run her life. Brandi doesn't like the way Mero treats Sable and he's willing to risk everything to make his point. Mero is very insecure. He's insanely jealous. He doesn't want Brandi involved in any way with his dealings with Sable. He's a very dangerous man, even more so when angered. Brandi has a lot more to lose than gain in getting involved here.

Thumbs Up to Chris Benoit. Let's face it, the man has … guts. Benoit, not exactly a big man at 5'10", 218 pounds, is the only man in WCW who has had the nerve to stand up to Raven and his henchmen. "Somebody has to do it," Benoit said. "There's a danger here, and the danger is that if Raven keeps getting away with what he's doing, he and his men will become too big and powerful, kind of like a mini-NWO. It's important. WCW is getting run over by cliques. We can't let this happen again." Good for Benoit. It's a tough job, but somebody has to do it. And Benoit is fighting this battle by himself.



Thumbs Up to Scott Hall. It is with great hesitation that we offer this commendation to a member of the NWO. We thought long and hard about it before deciding that Hall showed impressive determination by bouncing back from a loss to Chris Jericho to win the three-ring, 60-man battle royal at World War III. He also destroyed Jericho in a rematch, proving that he won't let anybody get him down. Too cocky? Maybe. Too one-dimensional. Probably. But Hall has been getting results. The win over Jericho and the victory, however tainted, at World War III were impressive notches on his belt buckle.

THUMBS Down



Thumbs Down to Shawn Michaels. Nice WWF European title defense, Shawn. Way to act like a champion, big man. They oughta take away your WWF World championship, too. "The Heartbreak Kid" wasn't at all heartbroken after losing the European belt to DeGeneration X teammate Hunter Hearst Helmsley. In fact, he was happy about it. Michaels, of course, wasn't happy when the WWF ordered him to defend the European title against a friend, but he took care of the situation by virtually handing Helmsley the pinfall victory. You would think Michaels would have some pride. And you would be very wrong.

Thumbs Down to Rocky Maivia. Bad period of time for champions, eh? First Michaels gives up the European belt, then Maivia wins—if that's the word—the Intercontinental title by forfeit from Steve Austin. Finally, to make matters worse, Maivia starts acting like a jerk by behaving as if is the leader of the Nation of Domination and trying to overshadow Faarooq. Mr. Maivia, we have a reminder for you: You didn't win the I-C belt. You're not such great shakes. You were just fortunate to be in the right place at the right time. You haven't done anything to impress us. You are acting like a jerk.

Thumbs Down to J.J. Dillon. Good show by the chairman of the WCW Executive Committee, who displayed absolutely no power or backbone when the NWO stepped in and took over the December 22, 1997, edition of *WCW Nitro* and turned it into *NWO Nitro.* Uh, Mr. Chairman, weren't you supposed to prevent this takeover, or at least make an attempt at preventing the takeover. You might as well have laid out the welcome mat. Okay, so you have no guts. You have no power. So what do you have? Oh, a paycheck? Well, hopefully not for long. It's time for WCW to bring in a new chairman to deal with the NWO. Dillon was supposed to be that man. Obviously, he isn't.

Thumbs Down to Chris Candido. Crybaby Chris is showing a lot of moxey these days. He and Lance Storm won the ECW tag team title, and now Candido's trying to become the big man in Triple Threat. He has pushed Storm to the side and given him no credit for the victory. He doesn't seem to have any interest in Shane Douglas, who is by far the biggest name in Triple Threat. He's acting on his own. Message to Candido: Wake up, Chris! It's a tag team title, That means you need a partner. It's Triple Threat. Triple means three. You, Storm, and Douglas. If it's just you, it's Single Threat. And that's no threat at all.

CORRESPONDENTS Reports

Vader executed two impressive splashes against Kane in their match in Boston. Kane was hardly hurt by the moves, however, and he came back to earn an impressive victory.

Boston, MA, *(Correspondent—Jim Imbruglia):* Kane has been on a path of destruction in the WWF since he entered the federation this fall, but he faced a huge roadblock in Vader on this card. Before the match started, Vader tried to attack his former manager, Paul Bearer, but Kane quickly pounced on his foe.

The slugfest continued until Kane threw Vader into the ring steps, dazing the "mastodon" for several minutes. When the action resumed in the ring, Kane took control and dominated Vader with a flurry of kicks and punches. He then flung Vader into the ringpost and executed a suplex and a legdrop. Vader did manage to mount a brief comeback by punching Kane before blasting him with a clothesline. He even nailed Kane with two big splashes from the second rope, but Kane got up after the second one and grabbed him by the throat. After executing two choke-slams on a stunned Vader, Kane had the pinfall victory.

In other matches: Marc Mero pinned Flash Funk ... Jim Neidhart pinned The Sultan ... Miguel Perez Jr., Jose Estrada Jr., & Jesus Castillo defeated Chainz, Skull, & Eight-Ball ... WWF World tag team champs Jesse James & Billy Gunn beat The Headbangers ... Ken Shamrock pinned Hunter Hearst Helmsley ... Steve Austin & The Legion of Doom beat Faarooq, Rocky Maivia, & Kama Mustafa ... The Undertaker beat Shawn Michaels by disqualification.

Jim Thorpe, PA *(Correspondent—Timothy A. Walker):* Int'l Pro Wrestling heavyweight champion Brick Bronsky did his best to use his speed and strength to counter the tremendous size advantage King Kong Bundy had in their match at the Flagstaff, but he was unable to overcome the interference of Notorious Norm, Bundy's manager, and his own brother. As a result, Bundy became the new IPW champion.

Bundy gained an early advantage when Norm repeatedly distracted special referee Johnny Graham. While Graham's back was turned, Bundy used the ring ropes to choke Bronsky. He also tried to distract the referee while Norm choked Brick, but Norm stopped when Graham threatened to disqualify Bundy.

As the match progressed, Brick somehow managed to come back and nail Bundy with a hard clothesline. He followed up that move by whipping Bundy hard from corner to corner several times. With Bundy favoring his lower back, Bronsky tried to finish him off with a bodyslam, but Bundy collapsed on top of him and got a near-fall. Then Bundy tried to finish Bronsky with a big splash in the corner, but Brick moved and applied a sleeperhold. At that point, Brick's brother, G.Q. Bronsky, distracted referee Graham, which allowed Norm to run into the ring and break the hold.

Brick quickly reapplied the sleeper, but this time Norm distracted Graham while G.Q. pulled Brick off Bundy. G.Q. then smashed his brother across the back with a chair. As Brick fell to the mat, Bundy hit him with a big

(Continued on page 55)

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YOU Asked Us...

Devon Storm, a veteran of many independents, knocks down NWA champ Dan Severn with an elbow. He has a good reason for not settling down in one promotion.

Q: "I would like to ask 'Dangerous' Devon Storm a question: Devon, I've seen you compete in the WWF, WCW, ECW, NWA, IPW, and numerous other independents in the past year, but I've yet to see you win a title belt. I think you've got enough talent, but when are you finally going to settle down and make a title run?" —Ericka Dickerson, New Orleans, LA

A: "There's more to this sport than just winning belts, Ericka," Storm said. "I've won my share of belts around the U.S. You just haven't been lucky enough to see it happen, but that's your problem. One of my goals right now is to get as much experience as I can and to wrestle as many top stars as I can. I'm still a young guy with a ton of talent, and I've got all the time in the world to win titles. I've taken it to everyone from Sabu to Brian Christopher to Dan Severn to Taka Michinoku, and I may have lost a match or two, but I've learned quite a bit in the last year and you'll be seeing me win a lot of big matches in 1998 no matter where I go."

• • •

Q: "My question is for the number-one cruiserweight in the world, Eddy Guerrero: Eddy, if you were only able to watch the matches of one wrestler, past or present, who would you choose to watch, and has that wrestler influenced your style in the ring?" —Sean Pearse, Newton, MA

Eddy Guerrero gives most of the credit for his success to ... himself. He also says his former tag team partner, Art "Beetlejuice" Barr (tossing Dutch Mantel), helped a lot.

A: "I'm surprised that a reader of this rag could come up with a question that shows this much insight," Guerrero said. "There are a number of wrestlers that I've admired in my life. Mexican legends El Santo and Mil Mascaras are two that come to mind right away. As far as style goes, my brothers Mando and Chavo were early influences, but when it comes to overall skill, neither one of them could touch me. If I had to choose one wrestler who I admire the most, I would have to select the late 'American Love Machine,' Art Barr. Some of you may remember Art as The Juicer in WCW some years ago, but from 1993 to 1995, Art was the most technically and aerially gifted wrestler this sport has known. He was my friend and probably my biggest influence in wrestling."

• • •

Q: "My question is for Sgt. Slaughter: Sarge, I've been a fan of yours since back in 1982, but don't you think you're too old to be stepping into a wrestling ring now? Shouldn't your job as commissioner of the WWF be limited to sitting at a desk and filling out paperwork?" —Tony Crisanti, Hartford, CT

A: "If pro wrestling was anything like a regular office job, I'd agree with you," Slaughter

(Continued on page 56)

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Introducing

By Stu Saks

BILL GOLDBERG

SEEMS STRANGE introducing a wrestler who has already made as much as an impact on the sport as Bill Goldberg has. He's already one of the biggest stars in one of the world's biggest federations. Yet ...

•Having made his pro debut so late in the year (a victory over Hugh Morris on September 22), he wasn't even on the ballot for *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* 1997 Rookie of the Year honors, and thus retains his eligibility for the award in 1998.

•Because of injuries, he's had relatively few matches.

•Many cynics attribute his instant stardom to the fact that he resembles WWF megastar "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin.

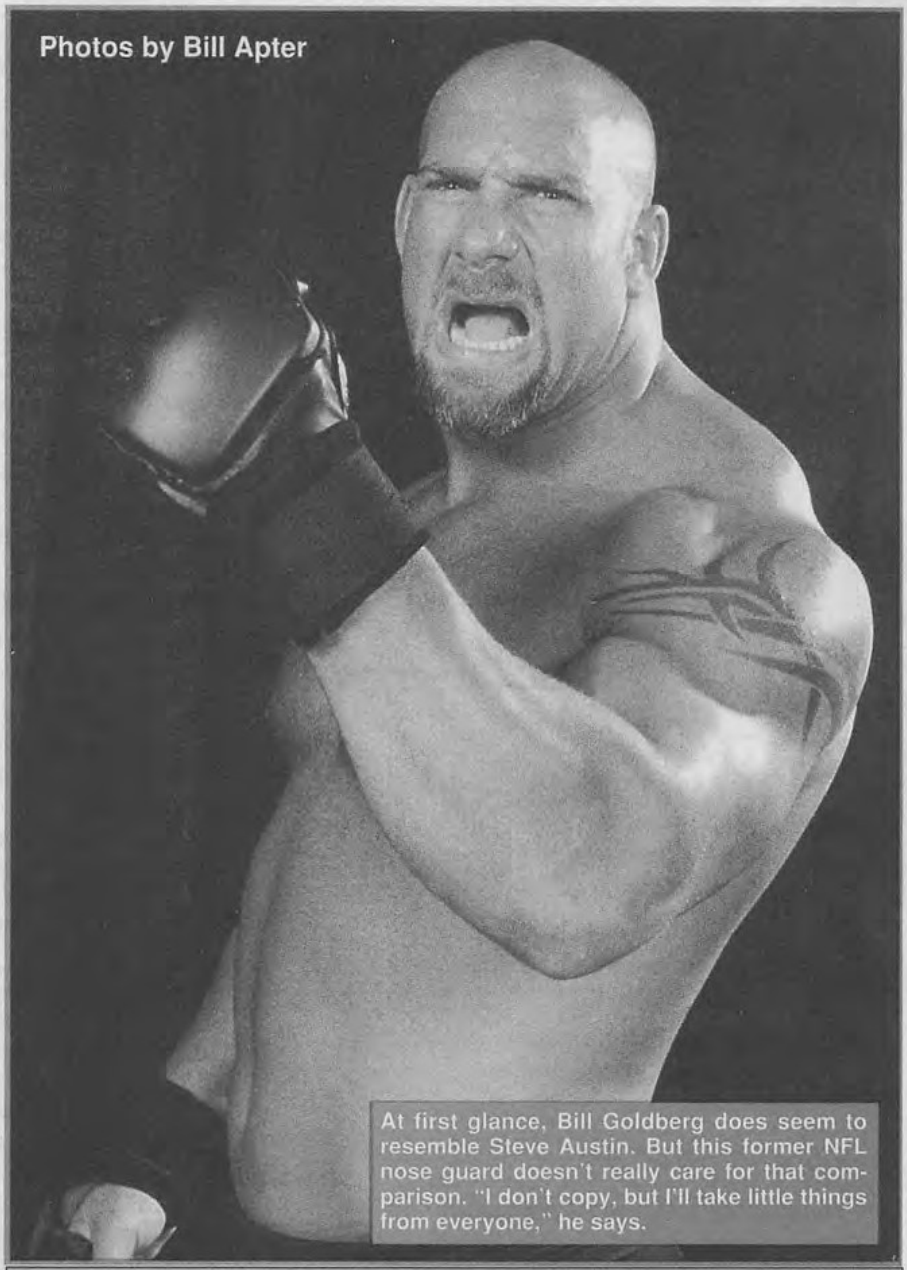
To the first two points, all Goldberg can say is, "Wait, you haven't seen even a fraction of what I can bring to the table."

To the third, he merely rolls his eyes and says, "We have the same hairdo, that's all."

Not that Goldberg doesn't admire Austin; he does. He admires quite a few wrestlers, including, paradoxically, the one he hates most. "I know this is going to sound strange to a lot of people, but Steve McMichael's always been an idol of mine," Goldberg said. "I've always liked his Cro-Magnon, smash-mouth approach to football."

But, of course, there's a flip-side to that admiration. McMichael represents more to Goldberg than a wrestler who is standing in his path to stardom. The former Chicago Bears great is a nagging

Photos by Bill Apter



At first glance, Bill Goldberg does seem to resemble Steve Austin. But this former NFL nose guard doesn't really care for that comparison. "I don't copy, but I'll take little things from everyone," he says.

Frustrated by his failure to reach his goals as an NFL player, Bill Goldberg plans to take his anger out on anyone who dares cross his path to wrestling greatness

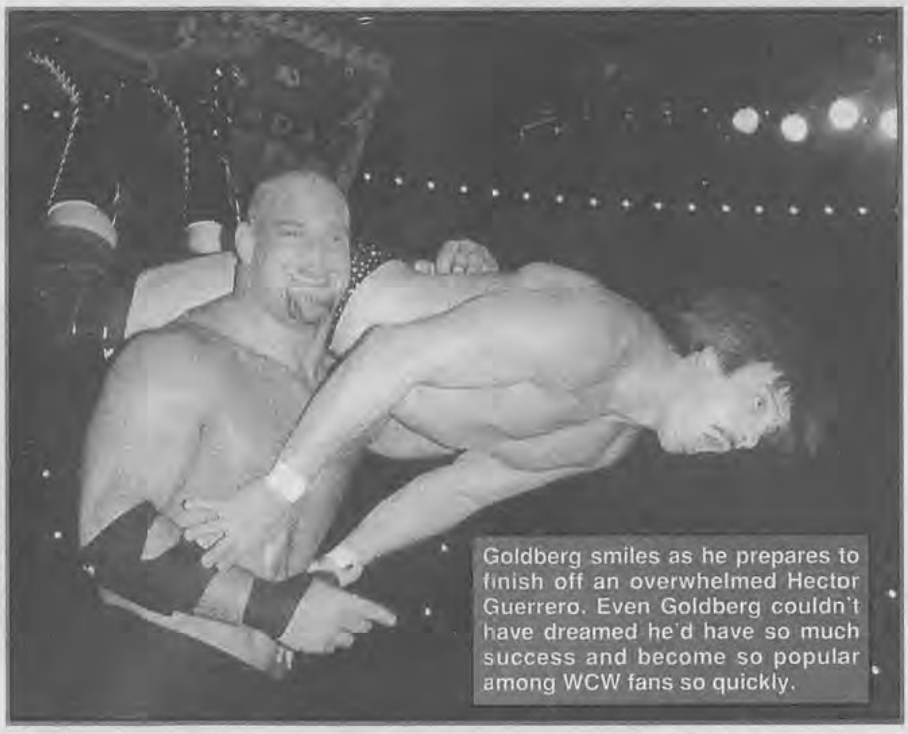
reminder of Goldberg's earliest unachieved dream: being a big-time football star on the NFL level.

Goldberg, who turned 31 in December, was one of the greatest stars ever to attend football powerhouse the University of Georgia. The nose guard was selected to the all-SEC team from 1987 through 1989 and was selected to Georgia's all-decade team for the 1980s. After being named one of the 52 best players in the nation, Goldberg was looking forward to being a top selection in the '89 draft when he was afflicted with the first of what would be a series of huge setbacks. Goldberg contracted mononucleosis and dropped so much weight with the illness (from 270 pounds to 245) that he was not even invited to the NFL Combine, where teams are given an opportunity to test top prospects both physically and intellectually in preparation for the draft.

Goldberg could only watch as player after inferior player was selected ahead of him. Finally, he was chosen in the 10th round by the Los Angeles Rams. Not a big problem, really. His signing bonus wouldn't be much, but at least he would have an opportunity to prove his worth at full strength. But then setback number two came his way. Goldberg tore a hamstring muscle in the final preseason game and was cut from the team.

Goldberg's next step was decidedly backward, as he signed in the spring with the Sacramento Surge of the World Football League. After the Surge won the championship, Goldberg was invited to the Atlanta Falcons' training camp the following summer. He didn't reach his goal of becoming a star, but by that time he had come to the realization that just being in the NFL meant you were a star. The key would be to stay there.

At 270 pounds, Goldberg knew that he was not the classic nose guard. "I was a blue-collar defensive lineman throughout my career," he said. "The thing about me is that I would play with any ailment."



Goldberg smiles as he prepares to finish off an overwhelmed Hector Guerrero. Even Goldberg couldn't have dreamed he'd have so much success and become so popular among WCW fans so quickly.

In 1994, he tore a muscle in his abdomen, an injury that would have sidelined just about anybody else. Not Goldberg. "I played with it wrapped up," he recalled. "I can't turn down an opportunity or a challenge. And I wasn't going to let them go out there and have fun without me."

The Falcons, of course, knew about his condition and opted not to protect him for the expansion draft. Goldberg was selected by the Carolina Panthers, but when he couldn't successfully rehab the torn muscle, he left the sport.

"That's why I hate McMichael so much," Goldberg said. "He needed to get his old butt out of there so young guys could start killing people."

By 1994, though, Goldberg was no longer young, at least by football standards. He was a 28-year-old without a marketable past and seemingly few prospects for the future. "I did a lot of soul-searching during that time," he recalls. "I dug a hole and jumped in and felt sorry for myself. Physically, it helped me; mentally, it hurt."

The mental anguish began to ease when he realized there was a very real opportunity to use his tremendous athletic abilities and powerful body to—as he says—kill people ... and make some money doing it.

Goldberg's entree to wrestling actually came years ago when he went to visit his brother Mike at the University of Minnesota. Mike's roommates at the time were Ken Patera and Ric Flair. "That planted a seed," he said.

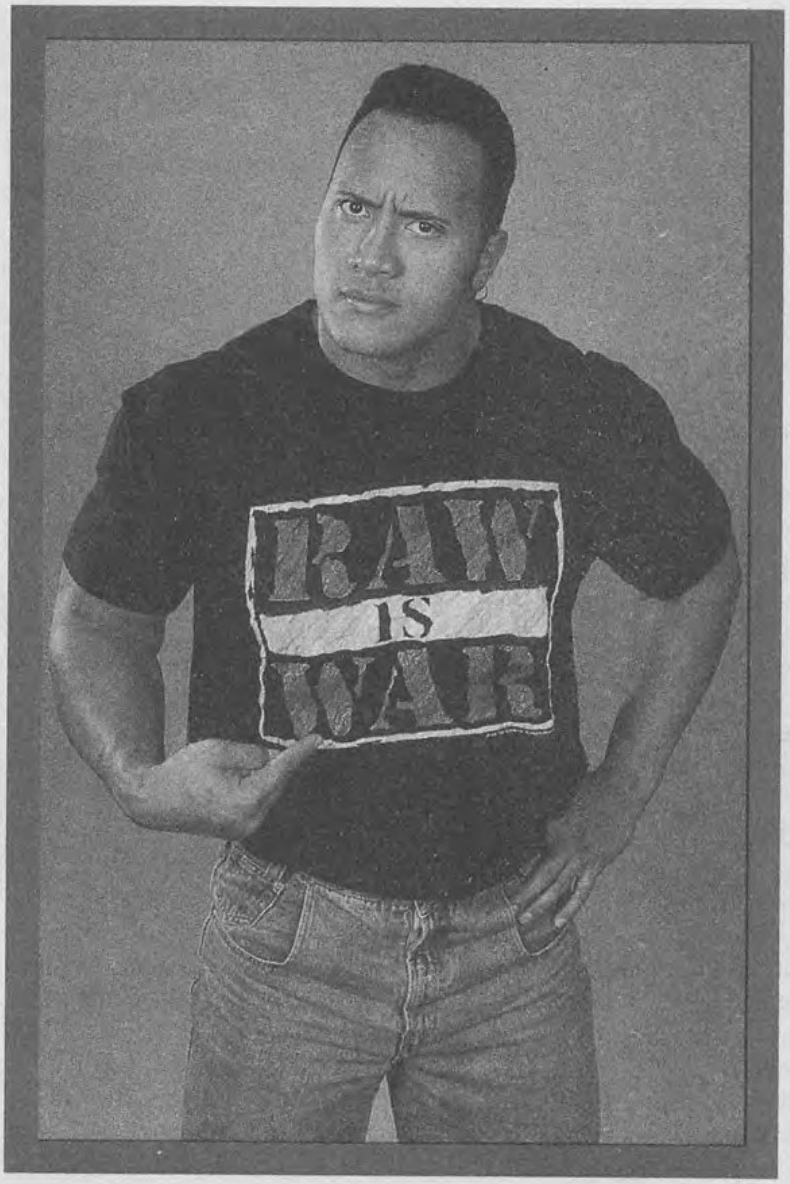
As a child growing up in Oklahoma, Goldberg was heavily into World Class and the UWF. "I admired Bruiser Brody, Mil Mascaras, Jimmy Snuka—big, athletic wrestlers who can move like small men."

Goldberg has given us a few glimpses of that formula since his pro debut, but (familiar story) he's been slowed by injuries. As he recovers, though, he wastes no time. He claims to have more than 1,000 videotapes, ranging from wrestling to sambo to ju-jitsu, and has been assimilating what he feels will be the most effective moves for his new career. "I don't copy [Got that Austin fans?], but I'll take little things from everyone," he said.

"In football," he concluded, "I never reached my potential. I'm going to reach it here." □

Q & A

ROCKY MAIVIA



SECOND GENERATION STAR Rocky Maivia used to be an afterthought. Not anymore. The son of Rocky Johnson is not only the most powerful man in The Nation of Domination, but he's also the WWF Intercontinental champion.

In mid-1997, Rocky Johnson wasn't happy to learn that his son was joining the hated Nation. But Maivia convinced him that it was good for his career, that pandering to the fans was getting him nowhere.

At December's DeGeneration X pay-per-view, Maivia, then a former I-C champ, challenged reigning champ Steve Austin for the belt. It turned out to be an eventful match. Austin drove his truck to ringside, and before his night's work was over, he executed a "Stone-Cold stunner" on the Nation's D-Lo Brown on top of the vehicle. Later he used a "stunner" to beat Maivia.

This incensed Vince McMahon. The next night, McMahon told Austin that he was not happy to see him use the truck as a weapon and ordered a rematch between Austin and Maivia. Austin wasn't receptive to the idea. Rather than wrestle Maivia, he handed him the belt. Then he executed another "stunner" and grabbed the belt back. About 24 hours later, he threw it into a river.

Now Maivia's the champion, although he didn't win the belt, and he has also taken on more power within The Nation of Domination. This power wasn't handed to him. He took it, resulting in friction between him and NOD founder Faarooq.

Who's in charge? What's going on? Is Maivia proud of being I-C champion despite the method of victory? Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum tried to find out.

Rocky Maivia drops an elbow on Ahmed Johnson, a man he once called his best friend. Now he only seems to consider his cohorts in The Nation of Domination his friends. Well, two of his three cohorts, at least.

Q: Congratulations on your Intercontinental title victory, although ...

A: Although what?

Q: Although you didn't really win the title.

A: Oh, no? You saw my match tonight. What did the ring announcer call me when he introduced me?

Q: The Intercontinental champion.

A: Okay, so how did The Rock get to be champion?

Q: Why doesn't The Rock tell us?

A: Fine. I beat Steve Austin. Decisive victory. Very clear-cut. No question about it. The Rock was the better man that night.

Q: You beat Austin?

A: Yes, I beat Steve Austin. He was afraid of me.

Q: Now we're getting closer to the truth.

A: Are you accusing me of lying?

Q: No. It's just that you didn't exactly win the title. It was forfeited to you. He beat you decisively at DeGeneration X the night before he forfeited it.

A: Hey, is it my fault that Austin was afraid to get into the ring with me again? Is it my fault that he was afraid to deal with The Nation of Domination? No. Austin had the belt. It meant a lot to him. He wasn't going to give it up for nothing. But it was probably a smart decision considering the shape his spine is in. The Rock could have done serious damage to that neck of his. He gave up the title to me rather than lose it in the ring, which is exactly what would have happened. He knew it, I knew it, everybody knew it.

Q: I didn't know it.

A: So? Who cares about you?

Q: Fine. So what you're saying is that there's no way you would have lost to Austin?

A: That's right. No way. Care to go over the events again?

Q: No. That's okay. Although I would like to know ...

A: What?

Q: Just a second. Let me finish the sentence. How does a "Stone-Cold stunner" feel?

A: Are you being smart with The Rock?

Q: No, but you experienced Austin's "stunner" a few times within just a few days. You've experienced it more recently in tag team competition against Austin. How did it feel?

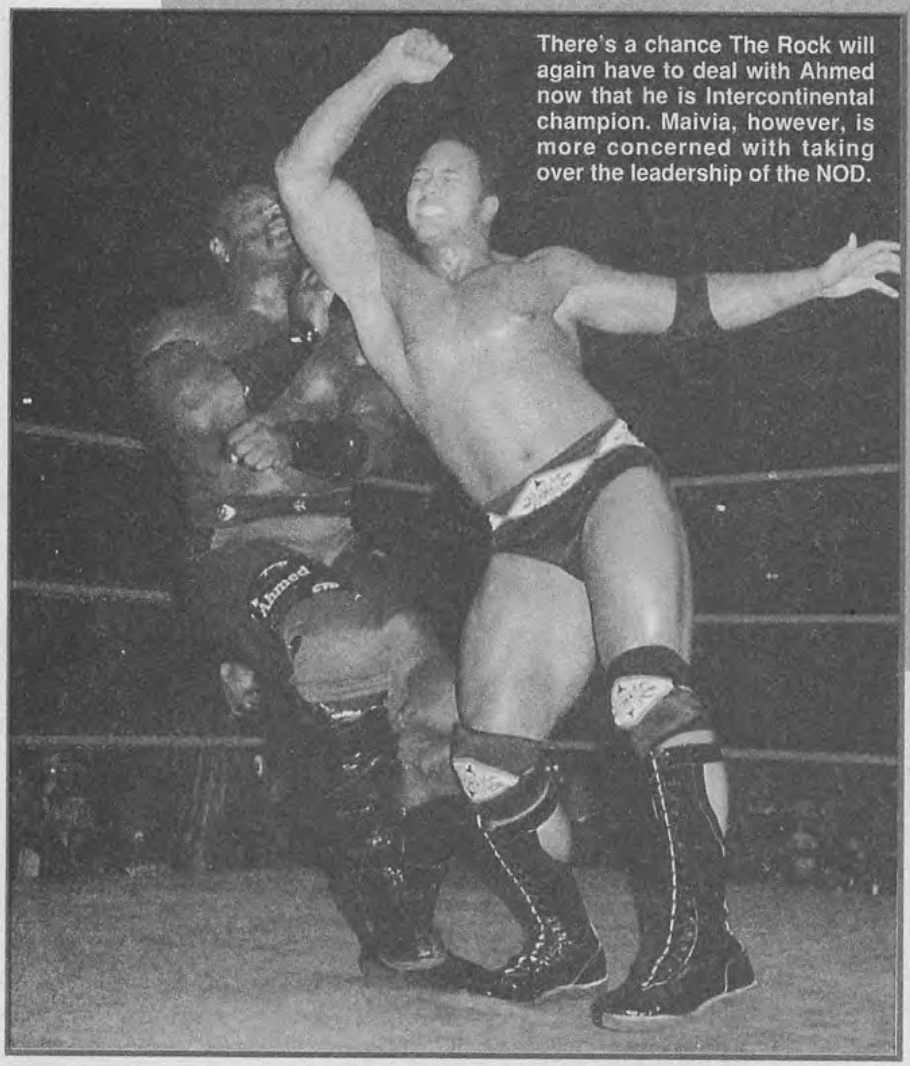
A: Would you like me to show you?

Q: Why, you know the "stunner"?

A: Everybody knows the "stunner." It's a simple wrestling move executed by a simple person.

Q: Ouch.

A: Austin's a coward. He'll come out there with his big truck, or he'll attack The Rock from behind, but when it came to a face-to-face match, he wanted no part of that. Where's his guts? He comes across as this big, tough guy, but he's not tough at all. All he does is drive his big truck and complain about not getting the respect he deserves. Then he has a chance to gain some respect by beating me in the center of the ring, like



There's a chance The Rock will again have to deal with Ahmed now that he is Intercontinental champion. Maivia, however, is more concerned with taking over the leadership of the NOD.

a man, but he passes up the chance. You know what that makes him?

Q: A former Intercontinental champ?

A: Well, that, too. But it makes him a fool and a coward.

Q: You already called him a coward.

A: Well, I'm calling him one again. And if that gets him mad, too bad. He's welcome to take me on any time he wants, right in the middle of the ring, no trucks, no nothing ...

Q: No Nation of Domination?

A: Hey, if that's what he wants, that's exactly what he'll get. If I don't want The Nation of Domination at ringside, they won't be there.

Q: You can just tell them that?

A: That's right.

Q: Because you're in charge now.

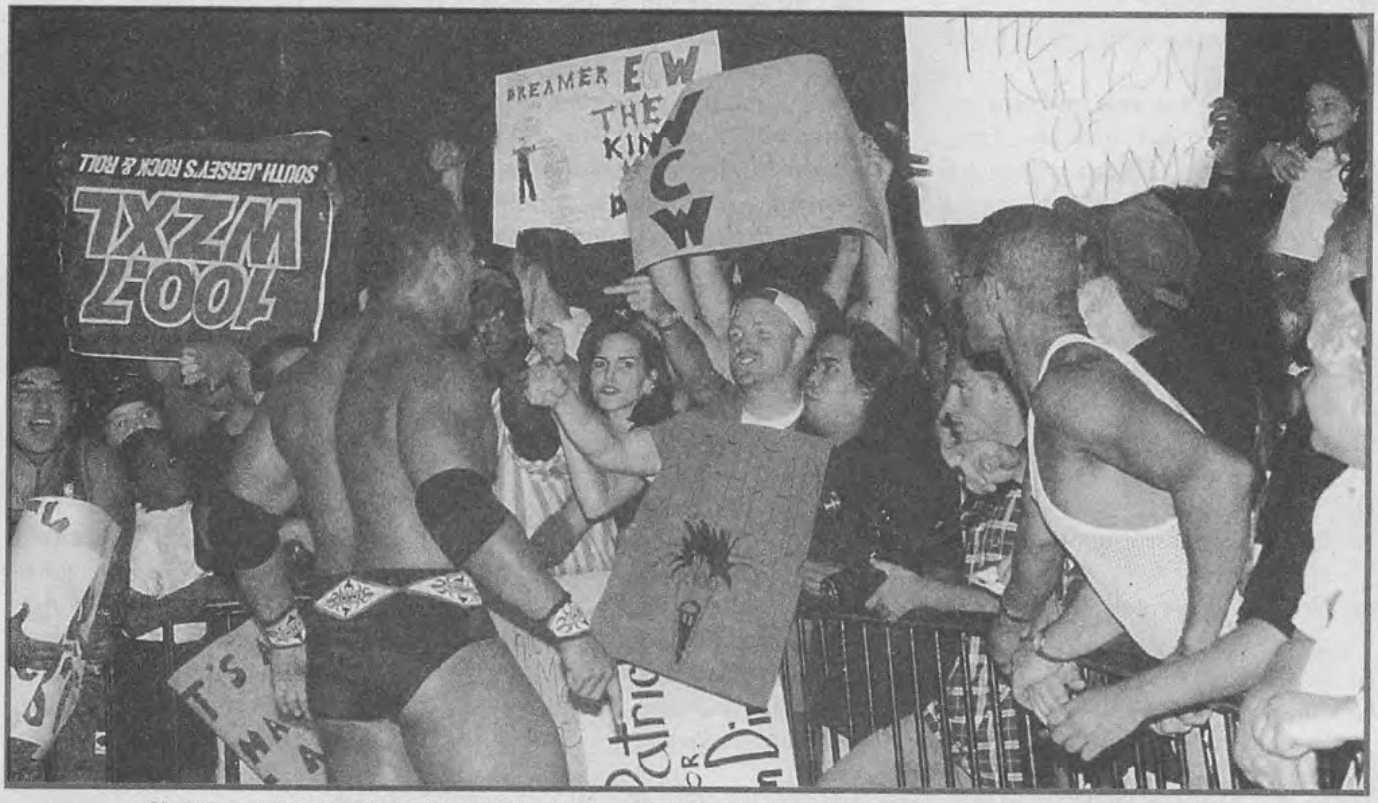
A: You got that right. It's about time somebody got that right, because that's the way it is.

Q: Faarooq thinks otherwise.

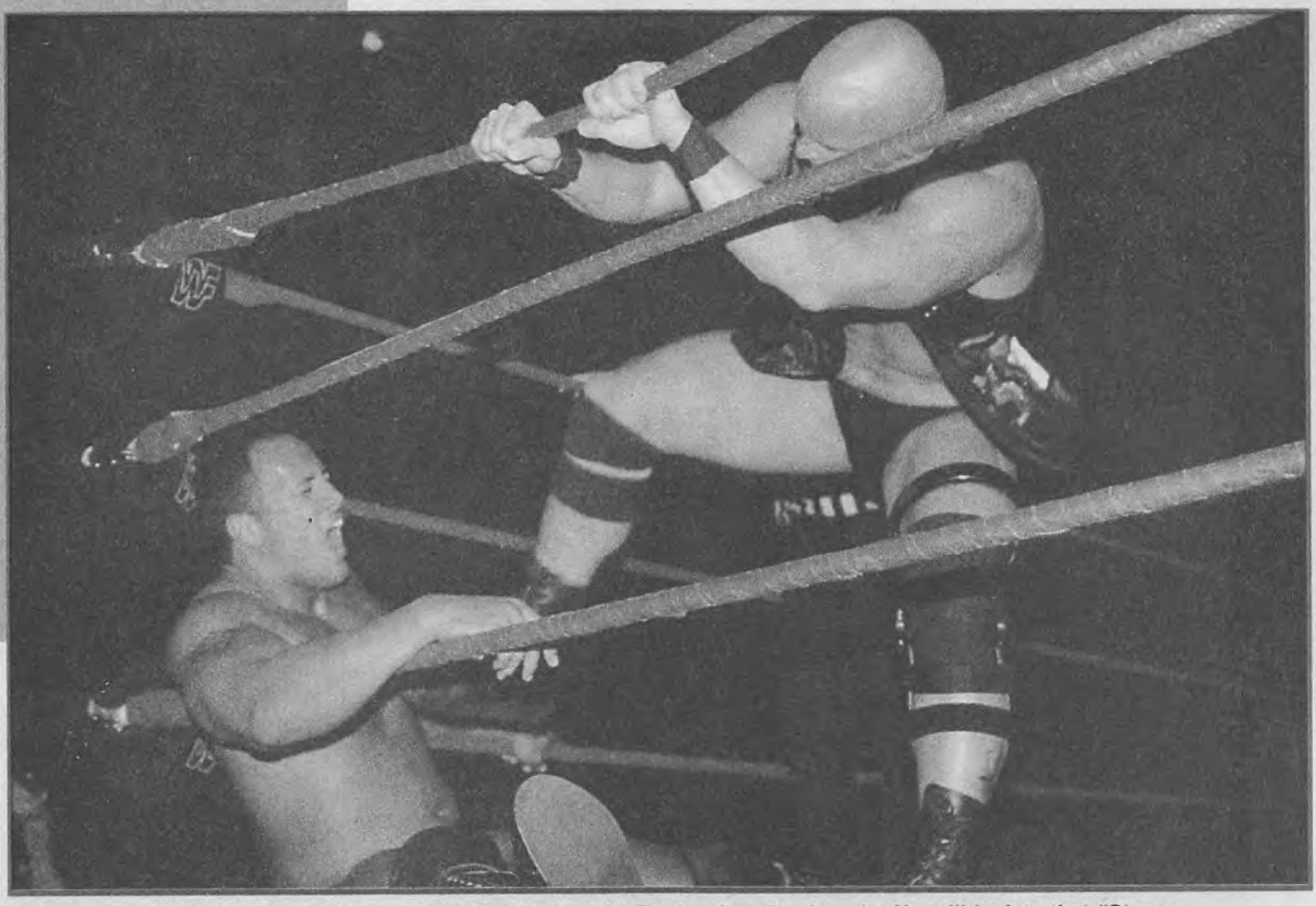
A: Yeah, but not for long. I've got the power because I've got the belt. What's he got?

Q: I don't know.

A: Exactly. You don't know. I



Maivia would likely be much better off if he ignored all those derisive chants from ringside fans. He is clearly one of the most hated men in the WWF.



A kick to the chest from Steve Austin has The Rock grimacing in pain. He still insists that "Stone-Cold" is afraid of him. Could it be the other way around?

don't know. Even he doesn't know. He has a big mouth, I'll tell you that, but he doesn't have much else going for him. The Rock is the leader of this group. The Rock is the best damn Intercontinental champion in history. I've proven myself. The Nation of Domination is mine. The Rock is just better suited to being a leader. If Faarooq really thought about things, he'd realize that he's better off taking a lesser role within the Nation.

Q: You've just taken control?.

A: The only way to get power is to take power. Nobody hands you power. You have to seize it. Take it for your own. Prove yourself.

Q: Which you've done.

A: That's right.

Q: How?

A: By winning the Intercontinental title. Rosenbaum, The Rock knows what you're getting at, but that was no fluke. The Rock was Intercontinental champion twice in one year. It's not like The Rock was some johnny-come-lately from off the streets. I've been champion before. I'm a worthy champion now.

Q: If it were up to you, what action would you take against Austin for throwing the belt in that river?

A: The Rock would have fired him. Made an example out of the man. The Rock would never have done such a thing. The Rock has morals and values.

Q: Why do you let the chants of the fans bother you? I thought you didn't care about those people.

A: I get upset because it just shows me how weak and pathetic all those people are. They don't recognize The Rock as the elite athlete that he is, and that's sad.

Q: How does your father feel about everything you're doing? Is he still supporting you?

A: Mr. Rosenbaum, you have a strange system of values. Nobody's going to deny something that's handed to him. At first, my father was against me joining The Nation of Domination, but it turned out to be the right move. He knows it. He agrees with me. And he would've called me a fool if I didn't accept the belt. The most foolish thing I did that night was turn by back on Austin, but it won't happen again.

Q: You mean you've learned from your mistakes?

A: I learn from my mistakes every day. Only a fool doesn't.

Q: And you're no fool.

A: That's right. I'm the Intercontinental champion ...

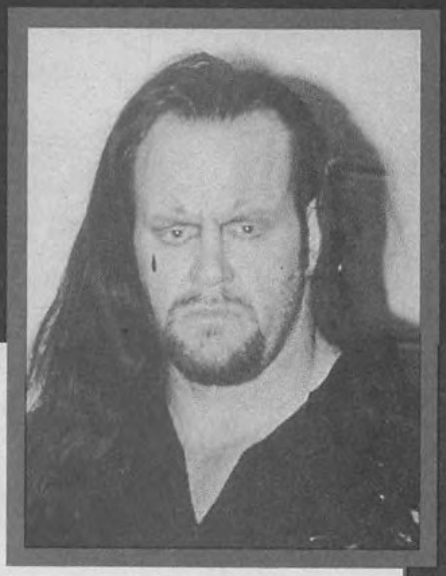
Q: And the leader of The Nation of Domination.

A: Right. □

X-Ray

THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES

THE UNDERTAKER



The Undertaker always looks to finish off his opponents with that "tombstone" piledriver of his. Some of our experts would still like to see him add to his repertoire.

CAPT. LOU ALBANO

"It's hard for the Captain to get a read on this guy because he's so unorthodox. He can look robotic at times, and he's not really my kind of wrestler. To wrestle for me, you gotta be at fever pitch, baby, all the time. And he doesn't have a diverse repertoire. But if he gets his hands on you, all you can do is say your prayers, because a man of his size can take you out real quick. He's been a winner for a long time, and I guess that's all that matters."

Capt. Lou Albano, "The Guiding Light," has managed 13 different tag teams to a record 17 WWF World tag team titles.

KILLER KOWALSKI

"I've always liked The Undertaker's no-nonsense approach. He's very efficient and uses his size and strength very well. I think he's done a lot better without that manager of his. Paul Bearer is a smart guy, but quite frankly, he was playing too many head games with The Undertaker. Even though Bearer knows what buttons to push, he was becoming too much of a distraction. I don't care for that fancy ring entrance stuff, but they don't come much tougher than Undertaker."

Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rule-breakers in the history of the sport, runs a wrestling school in Malden, Massachusetts.

HARLEY RACE

"I've wrestled some big boys in my day, and the one thing I can tell you about big wrestlers is that they are usually one-dimensional. The Undertaker is an imposing physical specimen, but he's not technically sound. I think the athleticism of a Dean Malenko or Jushin Liger would confound Undertaker. Some of the younger guys like The Giant and Kevin Nash can match his strength, too. Sooner or later, Undertaker is going to have to adapt his style to remain successful."

Harley Race, an eight-time NWA World champion, has also managed top stars like Lex Luger and Big Van Vader.

FABULOUS MOOLAH

"The Undertaker always gives me the creeps. I'd bet my boots that half the guys who get in the ring with him are scared to death, though they'd never admit it. That's half the battle right there. His moves are very basic: a lot of choke-slams, kicks, clotheslines, and, of course, that 'tombstone' piledriver. He's got a lot of moves that can end the match just like that. The style he uses works for him, and I think his record pretty much speaks for itself."

Fabulous Moolah, the finest woman wrestler in history, held the World title for 28 years. She now trains wrestlers in Columbia, South Carolina.

OLE ANDERSON

Well, nobody except The Giant or maybe Kevin Nash is gonna overpower The Undertaker. Everybody knows how strong he is. But he can't hurt you if he can't catch you, right? I've always said the key to beating The Undertaker would be using your speed. Stay one step ahead of him and keep moving—almost like a boxer. He doesn't move fast, so if you use that style, I think you can beat him. Unfortunately, too many guys get sucked into toe-to-toe brawls with him."

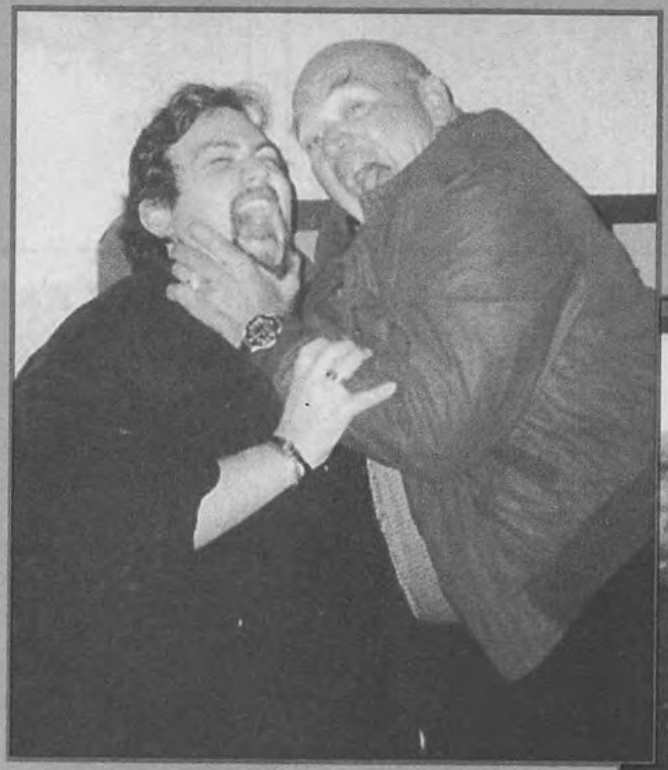
Ole Anderson, a five-time former NWA World tag team champion and founding member of The Four Horsemen, has been retired for several years.

PAUL ORNDORFF

"The Undertaker's got more on the ball than people give him credit for. He's been wrestling for some time and there's no substitute for experience.His wrestling skills have improved because of it and he's learned to put moves together. Without that big foot to the face, I don't think his 'tombstone' piledriver would be effective. So, even though he won't be confused with Mil Mascaras, The Undertaker is more than just a brawler out there. He's very smart."

Former WCW TV and World tag team champion Paul Orndorff retired from active competition after suffering a neck injury in December 1995.

Beyond THE SQUARED CIRCLE



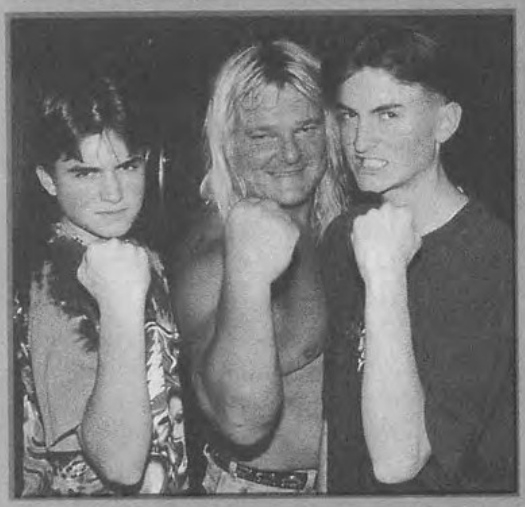
◀ George "The Animal" Steele apparently doesn't like the style of WRKO-AM (Boston) talk show host Jeff Katz, who also serves as co-host of the Century Wrestling Alliance's weekly TV show.

▲"Mean" Marc Ash, a veteran of the North Carolina independent scene, wasn't looking all that mean on the day he and his fiancee, Andrea, walked down the aisle.

▲ Being a WCW matchmaker is not an easy job, but Terry Taylor had no idea when he took the job that he'd also be called upon to do some chiropractic work for Teddy Long.

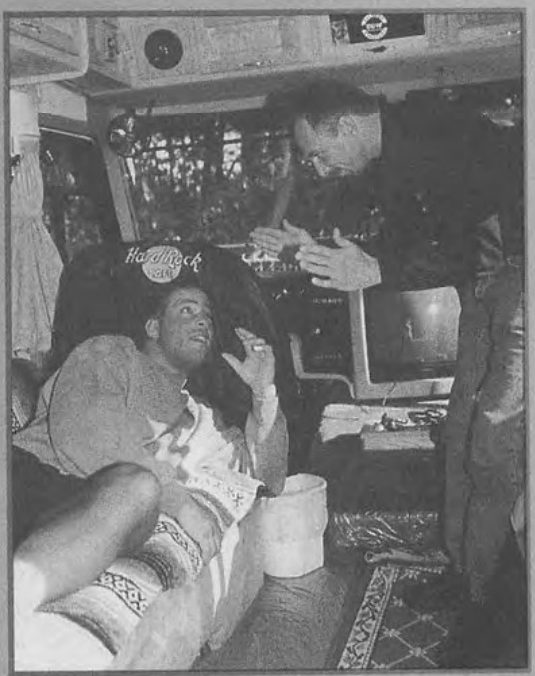
▲The Godwinns are mean when they're inside the ring in WWF competition, but they look like two lovable country boys when they're around country music star Cledus T. Judd (they appeared in one of his videos).

▼ It was a thrill for Ben Brock, star of the movie *Flubber*, to meet The Giant on *The Tonight Show*. To say The Giant is twice is his size is not much of an exaggeration.



◀ Greg Valentine is known for having one of the hardest elbows-mashes in wrestling. Fans Josh (left) and Fred Shernoff look every bit as mean as "The Hammer" in this photo.

▲ Dude Love, the self-proclaimed hippest cat in the WWF, must have been a bit tired when this shot was taken. Instead of walking around the arena, he insisted on traveling by forklift.



▲ Bill Alfonso, *PWI* Manager of the Year for 1997, always wants to talk strategy. He offered some advice to Rob Van Dam even as Van Dam tried to catch a nap in Fonzie's mobile home.

Spot Light ON . . .

SHAWN MICHAELS

ONCE UPON A time, there was a tag team called The Midnight Rockers ... The days in which the duo of Shawn Michaels and Marty Jannetty dominated the AWA tag team scene seem like a lifetime ago, as Shawn is now recognized as one of the best ***singles*** *wrestlers in the world.*

Michaels made his pro debut in 1984. By 1986, he was teaming with Jannetty. Critics called them copycats of both The Rock 'n' Roll Express and The Midnight Express, but they earned a great deal of respect by winning the AWA tag belts for the first time in 1987.

When The Rockers debuted in the WWF in 1988, most critics thought the tiny team would have a rough go of it against teams like Demolition, The British Bulldogs, and The Hart Foundation, but Michaels and Jannetty did well. Several years later, Shawn decided to strike out on his own. He blindsided Jannetty during a "Barber Shop" interview with Brutus Beefcake and threw him through a plate glass window. Michaels later took on the nickname "Boy Toy."

Then came one of the biggest matches of Shawn's life: a Survivor Series 1992 showdown with World champ Bret Hart. The "Hitman" forced Michaels to submit in that match, igniting a long rivalry.

Michaels finally won his first major singles title in 1993, defeating Davey Boy Smith in a brilliant match for the Intercontinental title. He held that belt until Jannetty issued an impromptu challenge to him in May 1993 and pinned him. He regained it three weeks later with the help of his new bodyguard, Kevin "Diesel" Nash. They would go on to win the WWF tag title together in 1994.

Michaels briefly left the WWF in 1993, only to return to face I-C champ Razor Ramon (Scott Hall) in ***PWI****'s Match of the Year at WrestleMania X (1994). Michaels lost that memorable bout, one of the most exciting of the '90s. "The Heartbreak Kid" won his third I-C belt from Jeff Jarrett, but had to forfeit it after he was injured in an altercation outside a Syracuse, New York, nightclub.*

Michaels finally achieved his dream of winning the WWF title when he defeated Bret Hart in an "iron man" match at WrestleMania XII in 1996. Michaels lost the belt to "Psycho" Sid less than eight months later, but regained in his hometown of San Antonio, Texas, at the 1997 Royal Rumble. Then just a month later he gave up the World title so he could take time off to let his injured knee heal. When he returned, his relationship with the fans began to deteriorate.

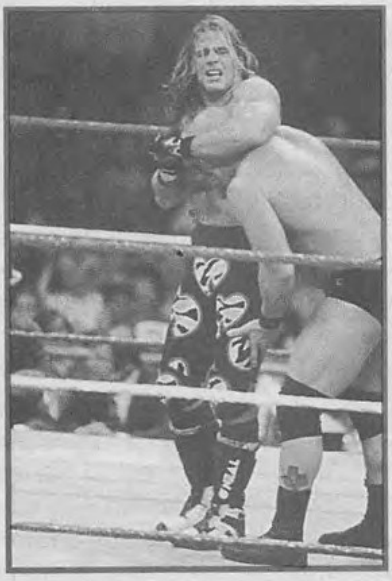
Thanks to a controversial win over Bret at Survivor Series '97, he became a three-time WWF World champion. As the leader of DeGeneration X—a controversial clique that also includes Hunter Hearst Helmsley and Chyna—Michaels lives for his time in the "Spotlight."

October 1986: Michaels was not all that cocky or that flamboyant early in his AWA career. Here he executes a basic bodyslam on The Alaskan.

February 1987: Michaels first rose to prominence when he and Marty Jannetty formed The Midnight Rockers and won the AWA World tag team belts from Buddy Rose and Doug Somers.

March 1994: It was probably the most thrilling and grueling ladder match ever. Michaels lost to then-WWF I-C champ Razor Ramon at WrestleMania X, but not before he inflicted a lot of punishment,

April 1995: After going through two years of good times with Kevin "Diesel" Nash, Michaels split with his former bodyguard. Nash won their WrestleMania XI showdown, but Michaels got revenge in rematches a year later.



September 1996: First they were rivals, then they were WWF tag team champions, and now they're on opposite sides again. Maybe Michaels-Steve Austin will be 1998's Feud of the Year.

November 1997: It will go down as perhaps the most controversial match in WWF history. Michaels beat Bret Hart by submission for the WWF title at Survivor Series. At least that was the official decision.

Scrapbook

Explore with us the rich history of this great sport as we recall the important news stories at five–year intervals dating back a quarter of a century

MARCH/APRIL 1973

NWA CHAMPION DORY Funk Jr. was hospitalized with a concussion and multiple lacerations to the face and scalp when he drove his pickup truck over a six-foot bank and into a creek while rounding up cattle at his Texas ranch. Funk's title obligations were assumed by Jack Brisco ... Funk's last match before the accident was a technical draw against Tim "Mr. Wrestling" Woods. In that match, Woods fell to the concrete floor after bounding into the loose ropes. Though Funk was declared the winner, the champion asked the referee to change the decision to a draw and offered Woods a rematch ... The wrestling community mourned the death of Southeast promoter Jim Crockett Sr. ... Gene Kiniski won the Missouri title from Terry Funk on March 16 ... Roger Kirby upset Omar Atlas for the Central States title ... Superstar Graham was disqualified in his AWA title match with Verne Gagne ... Ray Stevens filed an official protest with the NWA claiming the referee stopped his match with U.S. champion Great Mephisto too early. Stevens had sustained serious facial cuts in the match and was blinded by his own blood ... WWF tag team champions Prof. Tanaka and Mr. Fuji gave a demonstration of their martial arts expertise before a TV audience ... Newly crowned Southern champion Paul Jones issued a challenge to Florida champion Jack Brisco ... WWF champion Pedro Morales won his grudge match with Fred Blassie when, before 22,000 Madison Square Garden fans, the referee stopped the match due to bad cuts on Blassie's face ... Bull Curry wore an asbestos mask to protect him from the fire-throwing Sheik ... A bloody brawl between The Sheik and Chief Jay Strongbow in Ontario ended when the Chief hit referee Pat Flannagan over the head with the press table. Strongbow had become enraged when Flannagan refused to give him the foreign object the official had managed to pry away from The Sheik ... Mike Graham and Kevin Sullivan held the Florida tag team title ... With the aid of manager Big K, Ivan Koloff and Superstar Graham defeated the popular team of Billy Robinson and Wahoo McDaniel in Winnipeg ... Former WWF champion Bruno Sammartino and Dominic DeNucci teamed to defeat Killer Kowalski and George Steele in Pittsburgh ... AWA tag team champions Paul and Jos LeDuc defended their belts in LaSalle, Quebec, against Gilles "The Fish" Poisson and

Dory Funk Jr. was in no shape to defend his NWA World title after he suffered a concussion and numerous facial lacerations in a pickup truck accident in Texas.

Kevin Sullivan (right) certainly looked young when and Mike Graham were Florida tag team champions in 1973.

Paul "The Butcher" Vachon ... Fred Blassie and Moondog Mayne split the $10,000 winner's prize when the two friends were the last remaining wrestlers in Boston's 18-man battle royal. Perennial battle royal champion Andre the Giant was eliminated fifth by Gorilla Monsoon.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Dory Funk Jr.; 2—The Sheik; 3—Victor Rivera; 4—Jack Brisco; 5—Great Mephisto; 6—Buddy Colt; 7—Terry Funk; 8—Mark Lewin; 9—Lord Al Hays; 10—Paul Jones.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Pedro Morales; 2—Bruno Sammartino; 3—Don Leo Jonathan; 4—Fred Blassie; 5—Chief Jay Strongbow; 6—Andre the Giant; 7—Moondog Mayne; 8—Prof. Toru Tanaka; 9—Sonny King; 10—Tony Garea.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Verne Gagne; 2—Billy Robinson; 3—Superstar Graham; 4—Wahoo McDaniel; 5—Ivan Koloff; 6—Dusty Rhodes; 7—Dick Murdoch; 8—Don Muraco; 9—Ken Patera; 10—Horst Hoffmann.

TAG TEAMS: 1—Prof. Tanaka & Mr. Fuji; 2—The Fabulous Kangaroos; 3—Crusher & Bruiser; 4—Karl Von Shotz & Kurt Von Hess; 5—Jos & Paul LeDuc; 6—Nick Bockwinkel & Ray Stevens; 7—The Fargo Brothers; 8—Goliath & Black Gordman; 9—David Morgan & Raul Mata; 10—The Interns.

MARCH/APRIL 1978

ARNOLD SKAALAND, WHO had managed the legendary Bruno Sammartino since his first WWF title reign, became the manager of newly crowned WWF champion Bob Backlund. "The Golden Boy" plotted Backlund's strategy for his successful title defense against Ken Patera ... Dick Slater used every illegal tactic he knew to dethrone Southern champion Pedro Morales ... Kevin Von Erich underwent surgery after suffering a serious knee injury at the hands of Killer Karl Krupp ... Dominic DeNucci and Dino Bravo won the WWF tag team title from Mr. Fuji and Prof. Tanaka on March 14 ... Eddie Graham resigned as NWA president ... Greg Gagne wrestled to a classic one-hour draw with AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel ... In spite of the fact that Superstar Graham was no longer WWF champion, Dusty Rhodes continued to follow the blond muscleman all over the continent. After their match in Toronto, Ontario, Dusty said: "I must pin his shoulders to the mat in front of my people and humiliate the man who has brought so much shame, so much sadness to professional wrestling" ... Later in the month, Rhodes was the recipient of the "Antonino Rocca Memorial Popularity Award," an honor given to the most loved wrestler who has never won a world championship ... Stan Hansen reigned as Georgia State champion ... Terry Funk went into special training for a scheduled match in Missouri against Harley Race, his first rematch with the man who beat him for the NWA title ... Former friends Jesse Ventura and "Playboy" Buddy Rose began a feud in the Pacific Northwest ... Billy Robinson retained his British Empire championship with a victory over King Kong Mosca ... Two titles were on the line when NWA tag team champions Ric Flair and Greg Valentine wrestled Mid-Atlantic champions Paul Jones and Rick Steamboat. When Jones captured Flair in an Indian deathlock, the resourceful Valentine went outside the ring and rang the bell. Thinking the match was over, Jones released the hold. The match went on until it was stopped at the time limit and declared a draw ... Three of the all-time greats, Dusty Rhodes, Mil Mascaras, and Andre the Giant, united for a victory over Mr. Fuji, Prof. Tanaka, and Ken Patera ... Tim "Mr. Wrestling" Woods upset Blackjack Mulligan for the U.S. championship.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Harley Race; 2—Dusty Rhodes; 3—Ric Flair; 4—Dick Murdoch; 5—Rocky Johnson; 6—Mr. Wrestling II; 7—Jack Brisco; 8—Terry Funk; 9—Rick Steamboat; 10—Stan Hansen.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Bob Backlund; 2—Superstar Graham; 3—Dusty Rhodes; 4—Tatsumi Fujinami; 5—Mil Mascaras; 6—Spiros Arion; 7—Luke Graham; 8—Ken Patera; 9—Dino Bravo; 10—Stan Stasiak.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Nick Bock-

winkel; 2—Verne Gagne; 3—Ray Stevens; 4—Billy Robinson; 5—Larry Hennig; 6—Jim Brunzell; 7—Greg Gagne; 8—Bob Orton Jr.; 9—Rufus R. Jones; 10—King Kong Mosca.

TAG TEAMS: 1—Ric Flair & Greg Valentine; 2—Dino Bravo & Dominic DeNucci; 3—Mike Graham & Steve Keirn; 4—Jim Brunzell & Greg Gagne; 5—Paul Jones & Rick Steamboat; 6—Mr. Sato & Mr. Saito; 7—Jack & Jerry Brisco; 8—The Valiant Brothers; 9—Ole Anderson & Jacques Goulet; 10—Tony Garea & Larry Zbyszko.

MARCH/APRIL 1983

LARRY ZBYSZKO SHOCKED the wrestling world when he bought the Georgia National title from Killer Brooks for $25,000. Brooks, who won the belt from Paul Orndorff, had previously agreed to sell Zbyszko the title. Later, Zbyszko was stripped of the title and a tournament was held to determine a new champion ... In a bloody cage battle, Rick Steamboat and Jay Youngblood captured the NWA World tag team title from Sgt. Slaughter and Don Kernodle in Greensboro, North Carolina, on March 12 ... A man calling himself The Professional came down to Florida and began offering $5,000 to any opponent who could beat him in 10 minutes, $5,000 to any opponent able to escape his favorite hold, and $5,000 to anyone who could remove his mask ... Bobby Heenan upped the bounty to $15,000 to any man who could put Hulk Hogan in the hospital and take him out of contention for the AWA World title, which was held by Heenan's charge Nick Bockwinkel ... The Samoans won their third WWF tag team title by defeating Jay and Jules Strongbow in Allentown, Pennsylvania, on March 8 ... Roddy Piper won the U.S. championship from Greg Valentine in Greensboro on April 16, but lost it back to Valentine only two weeks later ... Former AWA champion Verne Gagne made a one-night comeback to team with his old partner, Mad Dog Vachon, in Minneapolis. The former AWA tag team champions battered Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie and Crusher Blackwell ... Blackjack Mulligan and his son, Barry Windham, reunited after Mulligan watched Barry lose the Southern title to Frank Dusek because of Angelo Mosca's interference. "I realized at that point how much he meant to me and how pointless our differences were," Mulligan said. He vowed revenge against his son's enemies ... Another father-son combination had the opposite problem. Eddie Gilbert became greatly upset when his father, Tommy, turned rulebreaker in Tennessee ... Those two New York street brothers, Bugsy McGraw and Jimmy Valiant, joined forces to battle H & H Ltd., the notorious rulebreaking organization jointly managed by Gary Hart and Sir Oliver Humperdink ... Danny Hodge, whom many consider the greatest junior heavyweight in the sport's history, came out of retirement to wrestle in Oklahoma ... Andre the Giant's feud with Kamala reached a level

Larry Zbyszko thought he made an intelligent business decision when he bought the Georgia National title from Killer Brooks. He was quickly stripped of the championship, however.

Hulk Hogan was giving AWA World champ Nick Bockwinkel so many problems in 1983 that manager Bobby Heenan offered to pay $15,000 to anyone who could put him in the hospital.

of brutality and violence previously unknown to millions of Andre's loyal fans.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Ric Flair; 2—Roddy Piper; 3—Larry Zbyszko; 4—Dory Funk Jr.; 5—Crusher Blackwell; 6—Scott McGhee; 7—Bob Armstrong; 8—Frank Dusek; 9—Dewey Robertson; 10—Tommy Rich.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Bob Backlund; 2—Ivan Koloff; 3—Magnificent Muraco; 4—Mike Sharpe; 5—Jimmy Snuka; 6—John Studd; 7—Superstar Graham; 8—Rocky Johnson; 9—Pedro Morales; 10—Ray Stevens.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Nick Bockwinkel; 2—Rick Martel; 3—Hulk Hogan; 4—Jerry Lawler; 5—Wahoo McDaniel; 6—Ken Patera; 7—Jesse Ventura; 8—Mad Dog Vachon; 9—Jim Brunzell; 10—Crusher Blackwell.

TAG TEAMS: 1—Rick Steamboat & Jay Youngblood; 2—Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell; 3—Terry Allen & Brad Armstrong; 4—The Freebirds; 5—Mr. Olympia & Ted DiBiase; 6—The Masked Grapplers; 7—The Samoans; 8—Crusher Blackwell & Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie; 9—Kim Duk & Masa Fuchi; 10—The Midnight Express.

MARCH/APRIL 1988

RANDY SAVAGE WON the WWF World title in a tournament at WrestleMania IV on March 27 in Atlantic City. The "Macho Man" defeated Ted DiBiase in the final, thanks in part to some timely help from Hulk Hogan, who had been eliminated in the second round. Also at WrestleMania, Demolition captured the World tag team belts with a victory over Strike Force—Rick Martel and Tito Santana ... On the same day, at the NWA's inaugural Clash of the Champions in Greensboro, North Carolina, Lex Luger and Barry Windham won the World tag title from Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson. Three weeks later, the Horsemen regained the title after Windham turned against Luger during the match. Three days after that, on April 23, Luger and Sting defeated Anderson and Blanchard to win the Crockett Cup tag team tournament ... Pat Tanaka and Paul Diamond, also known as Badd Company, defeated The Midnight Rockers to win the AWA World tag title on March 19 ... Dusty Rhodes was stripped of the U.S. title and suspended by the NWA for 120 days following an incident during which Rhodes attacked Tully Blanchard and accidentally injured NWA President Jim Crockett ... Missy Hyatt was forced to serve as Jerry Lawler's maid for a day when "The King" defeated Eddie Gilbert's bounty hunter, Robert Fuller ... Stampede North American champion Owen Hart began feuding with "Strangler" Steve DiSalvo ... "Diamond" Timothy Flowers won the Canadian International Wrestling Association title tournament in unusual fashion: Every match was held inside a steel cage.

Elizabeth got to hold the WWF World title belt after Randy Savage won it (with some help from Hulk Hogan) in a tournament at WrestleMania IV.

Badd Company—Paul Diamond and Pat Tanaka—held the AWA World tag team belts for more than a year in 1988-89 following their title victory over Shawn Michaels and Marty Jannetty.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Ric Flair; 2—Sting; 3—Larry Zbyszko; 4—Mike Rotundo; 5—Nikita Koloff; 6—Lex Luger; 7—Barry Windham; 8—Al Perez; 9—Steve Williams; 10—Jim Garvin.

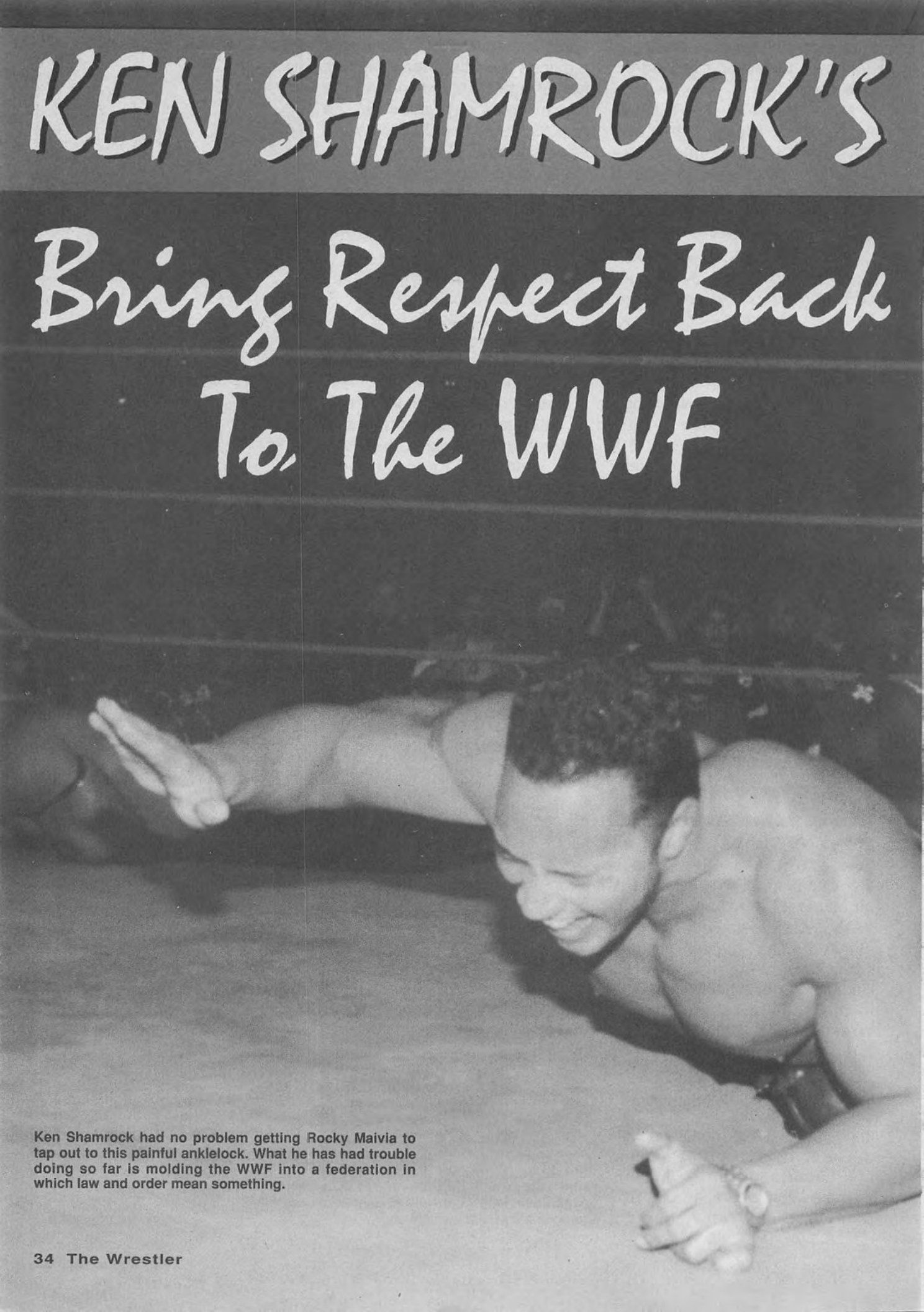
WWF RATINGS: 1—Randy Savage; 2—The Honky Tonk Man; 3—Ted DiBiase; 4—Hulk Hogan; 5—Andre the Giant; 6—Bam Bam Bigelow; 7—Brutus Beefcake; 8—Hacksaw Duggan; 9—Jake Roberts; 10—Rick Steamboat.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Curt Hennig; 2—Greg Gagne; 3—Jerry Lawler; 4—Wahoo McDaniel; 5—Paul Diamond; 6—Soldat Ustinov; 7—Eddie Gilbert; 8—Jeff Jarrett; 9—Rick Morton; 10—Ricky Rice.

TAG TEAMS: 1—Tully Blan-

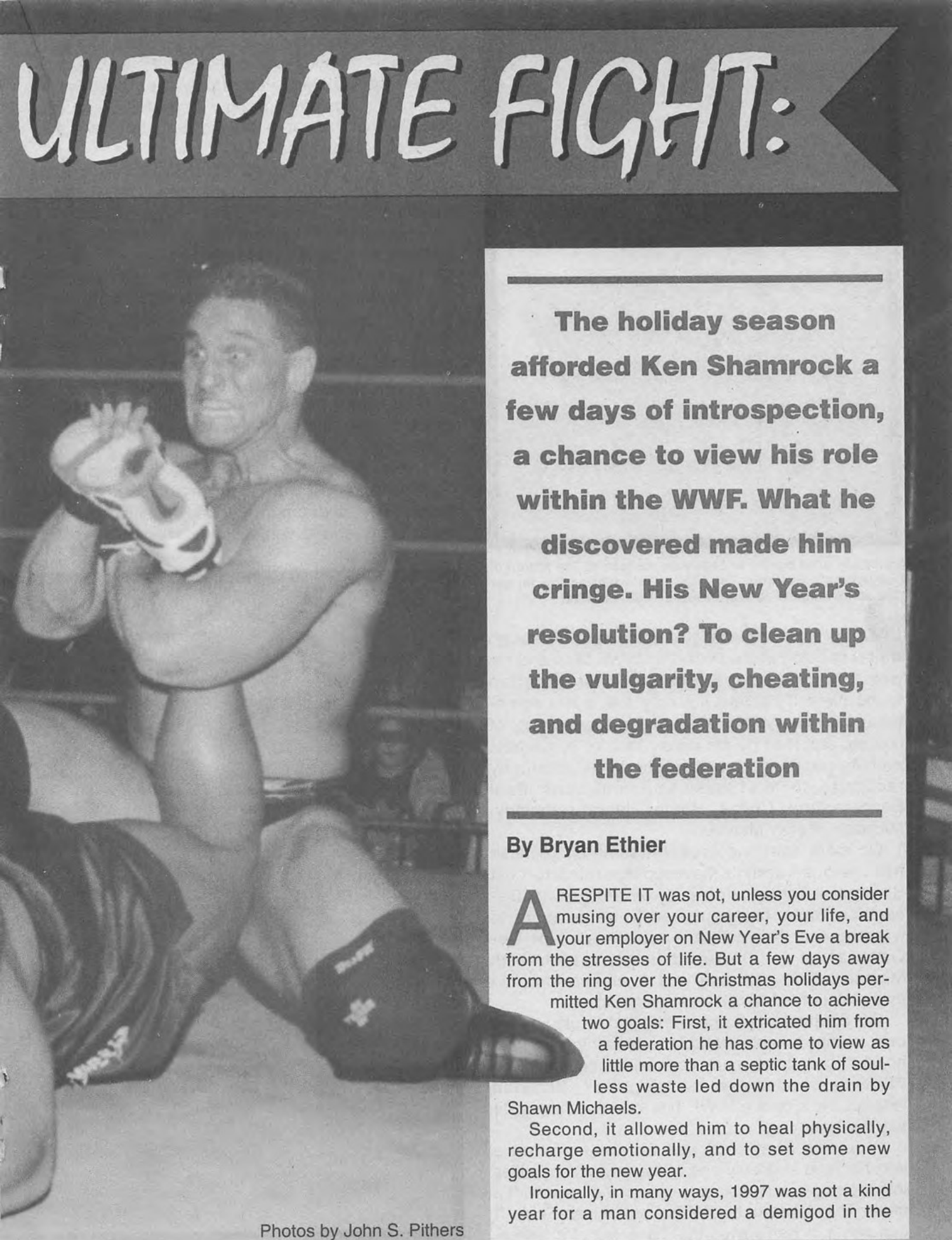
(Continued on page 57)

KEN SHAMROCK'S Bring Respect Back To The WWF



Ken Shamrock had no problem getting Rocky Maivia to tap out to this painful anklelock. What he has had trouble doing so far is molding the WWF into a federation in which law and order mean something.

ULTIMATE FIGHT:



Photos by John S. Pithers

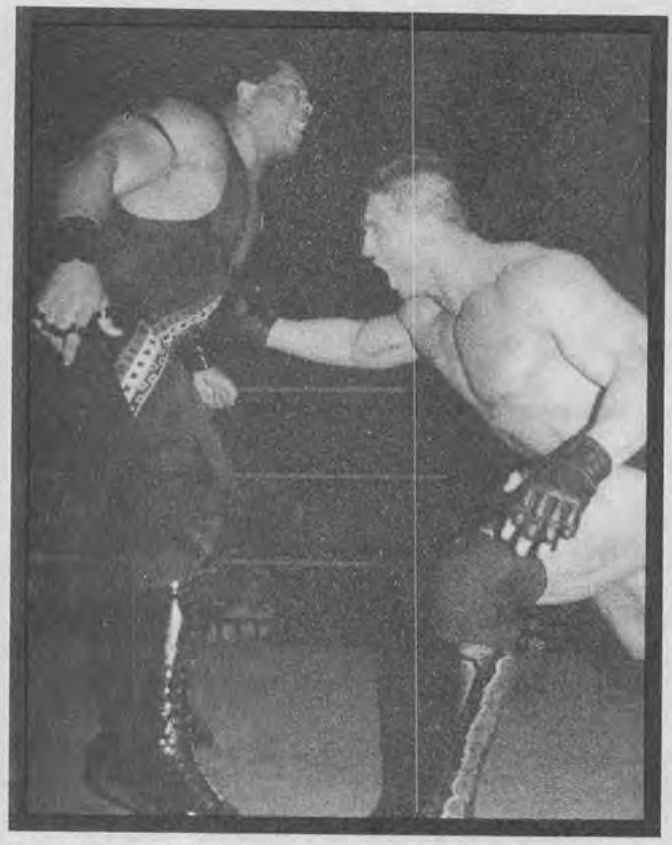
The holiday season afforded Ken Shamrock a few days of introspection, a chance to view his role within the WWF. What he discovered made him cringe. His New Year's resolution? To clean up the vulgarity, cheating, and degradation within the federation

By Bryan Ethier

A RESPITE IT was not, unless you consider musing over your career, your life, and your employer on New Year's Eve a break from the stresses of life. But a few days away from the ring over the Christmas holidays permitted Ken Shamrock a chance to achieve two goals: First, it extricated him from a federation he has come to view as little more than a septic tank of soulless waste led down the drain by Shawn Michaels.

Second, it allowed him to heal physically, recharge emotionally, and to set some new goals for the new year.

Ironically, in many ways, 1997 was not a kind year for a man considered a demigod in the



Shamrock uses his fist to pound on the face of The Nation of Domination's Faarooq. The NOD is one faction the former UFC star would like to see disappear from the WWF.

UFC, his former place of employment. Although well-respected and admired by WWF fans and his wrestling colleagues, Shamrock all too often found himself battling not only foe, but a sometimes corrupt system as well. That system is, of course, enforced by the unruly mob of scoundrels running rampant throughout the WWF. You may recognize some of these scurrilous sorts: Paul Bearer, Kane, Chyna, Hunter Hearst Helmsley, Michaels, Rocky Maivia.

On more than one occasion some or all these treacherous varmints have collaborated to cost Shamrock a title win or a key victory. In December, Shamrock appeared to be en route to winning the World title when the rest of Degeneration X interfered in his match with Michaels. The gold belt was a submission hold away, stolen out of Shamrock's grasp.

For Shamrock, who has struggled to play by his own unimpeachable standards, remaining fair and honest against the many cads slithering within the WWF has become a daunting task. Bringing respect back to the WWF has been stultifying to say the least.

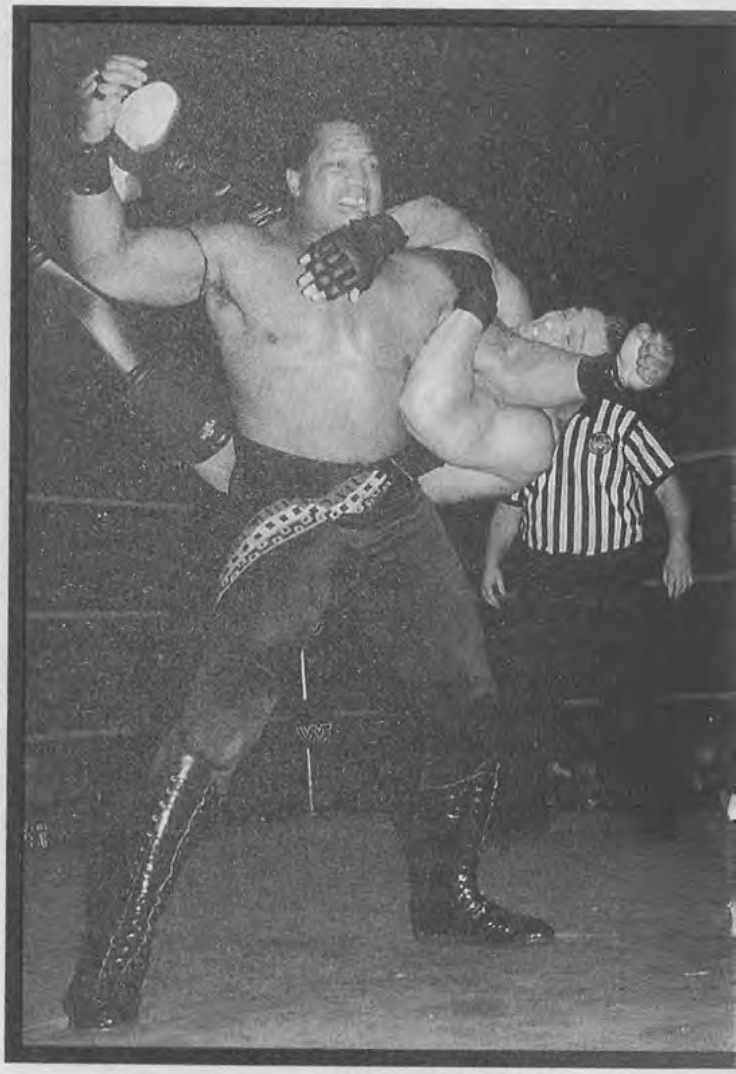
"You see Shamrock use an anklelock on a wrestler, and suddenly one of the guy's friends flies into the ring and smashes Ken over the head with a chair. That takes care of that," said Flash Funk. "I can see it in Ken's eyes that he is out of patience. His anger is building. I wonder if we'll see him suddenly become the kind of person he hates. It happened to Bret Hart. Fortunately, Ken believes in changing things and righting wrongs. Maybe he can become the street sweeper we need to shovel this garbage out the door."

Funk's analysis suggests Shamrock might wield force to clean up Main Street WWF. Well, maybe not.

Remember that Shamrock was once a great admirer of Bret Hart. He learned a lot from the "Hitman's" failed return to the WWF last year. He learned that you don't change people and don't change your environment by pointing fingers. You don't slam people in the face with their own transgressions. What Shamrock can do is try to bring people together to create a better world."

To do that, says broadcaster Michael Cole, Shamrock will first have to create his own clique, a family of good guys.

"It's like battling a werewolf," Cole explained. "You don't run around with a gun trying to shoot the beast. You gather a bunch of people, all armed with silver crosses, and you subtly convince the wolf to



leave of his own accord."

The wolves also include "good guys" such as Owen Hart and Steve Austin, who come across more boorish and vulgar than forthright—at least in the eyes of Shamrock. He came to the WWF with a reputation as a no-nonsense leader who condoned no underhanded actions. He now treads in waters filled with sharks who only bare their teeth when no one is looking.

"From Ken Shamrock's point of view," said Tom Brandi, "wrestling is becoming degraded. He has concerns that his children and the children of other wrestling fans will be subjected to the wrong ideals. Ken believes that public figures have a responsibility to be good leaders. I think he will step forward to ensure his place among the WWF's few socially conscious wrestlers."

Shamrock's fans hope their star's brief holiday break helped to clear his mind, to allow him to refocus and approach the hunt for a title with a renewed vigor. Shamrock has been said to be frustrated at not winning any titles.

Remember, he's still a very competitive athlete.

Therein lies much of Shamrock's upset. He enters the ring alone only to battle two, sometimes three opponents at once. Clearly, the rules do not apply to all wrestlers.

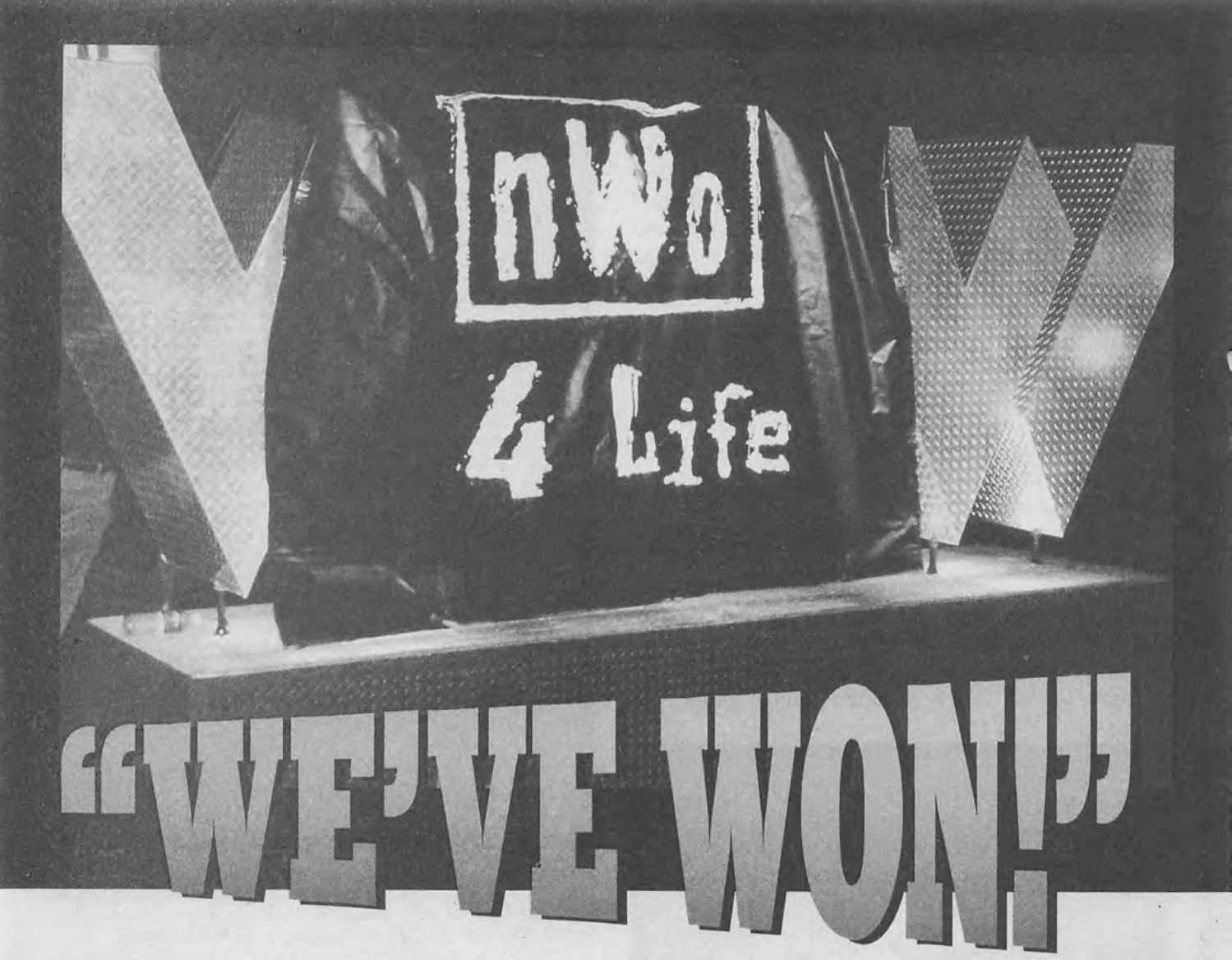
Even after he finishes off an opponent, Shamrock makes sure he keeps an eye on the aisle leading to the ring. He is all-too-aware of how tough it is to get a fair one-on-one match with no outside interference in the WWF today.

In his battles with Faarooq, Shamrock hasn't had any problems getting the fans to support him. But there's a part of him that is also uncomfortable with crowd favorites like Steve Austin. He thinks they should show a little more respect, too

So how far will Shamrock take his case? Perhaps to Commissioner Sgt. Slaughter. Maybe to WWF owner Vince McMahon. Both principles respect Shamrock, and McMahon went to great lengths to sign Shamrock before WCW or New Japan could get him. Likely all parties will do their utmost to satisfy a wrestler whose star is just beginning to shine.

"But don't expect McMahon to take sides against Michaels and the other stars who drive the ratings," said Rocky Maivia. "Let's be honest here; what brings out fans is not always what pleases the wrestlers. But that's just the way it goes. We all know who throws around the power."

The power wielders, unfortunately for Shamrock, are some of the very men he despises. Consequently, bringing respect back to the WWF will be no easy task. But don't expect him to dive headlong into the river that flows downstream, where the waters are always polluted. Expect him to try to change the direction of the current instead. □



"WE'VE WON!"

Maybe ... But Can The NWO Handle Its Own Success?

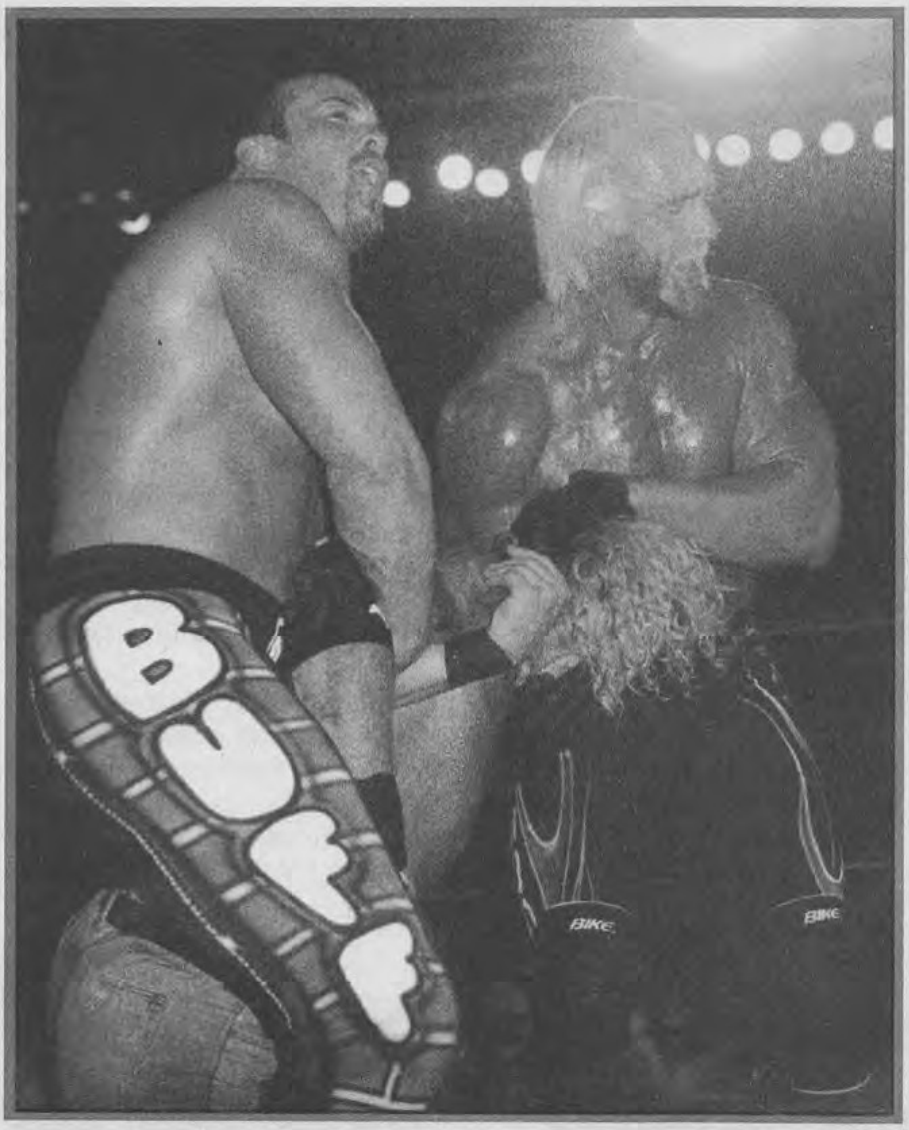
When the rebels rule the roost, they are rebels no longer. The NWO has won its power struggle with WCW. But will their reward be a booby prize?

By Dave Rosenbaum

THE FINAL SHOT in a war that raged for nearly 18 months was fired at WCW's World War III. At least that seems to be the way the NWO sees things. When Scott Hall won the three-ring, 60-man battle royal on November 23 and the referees let the NWO do as it pleased—letting Kevin Nash arrive late, allowing Hulk Hogan to wrestle when he wasn't even in the match—we should have known right away. The NWO broke every rule in the book and got away with it. Really, we should have seen it coming all along.

"We've won!" Nash said. "The war is over. The NWO has finally crushed WCW, just like we said we would. People have doubted us from the very beginning. We finally did it. Without Sting, without Ric Flair, without 'Diamond' Dallas, and without The Giant. Know what? Not having those guys made us even better. The NWO rules wrestling."

Okay, so maybe Nash got a little carried away. But if the NWO



Hulk Hogan and Buff Bagwell work over "Diamond" Dallas Page, one of the NWO's favorite targets. Page is one of the most outspoken enemies of the renegade outfit, but is it really a renegade outfit anymore?

It's an interesting point. The NWO feels it has destroyed its only reason for existence: WCW. But how long can the parasite survive without its host?

Not very long at all, according to WCW broadcaster Tony Schiavone.

"What they're doing doesn't make a whole lot of sense," he said. "I mean, they're creating their own titles. They want to be a separate organization with their own champions. But really they only have two choices: They can either let NWO wrestlers wrestle other NWO wrestlers, which will definitely lead to trouble, or they can have NWO wrestlers take on WCW wrestlers, which makes them no different from what WCW was before. It'll just have a different name."

Different name ... different titles ... different TV show ... different person in charge. Is wrestling ready for all this change, and is Eric Bischoff the man to usher it in? The pressure will be on him to present entertaining, exciting wrestling TV shows every week. We will see if Bischoff is a true wrestling magnate or just a rebel leader.

Life also changes dramatically for NWO wrestlers who have has, indeed, won the war, then it's time for them to deal with success. For the NWO, the real battle has just begun ... with itself. The NWO was doing just fine as a renegade organization, but how will it fare as a separate organization?

"No doubt about it," Larry Zbyszko said. "I hate to admit it, but they're probably the greatest renegade organization in wrestling history. But you know what they've done? They've converted themselves from renegades into Big Brother. Now they're the huge conglomerate. Can they live with that? I don't think they can, because when you get right down to it, they're a bunch of cowards."

Elizabeth leads members of the NWO in a rendition of "Oh, Canada" as a tribute to Bret Hart. NWO members have enjoyed interrupting WCW shows during the last 18 months. Sustaining their own weekly show, though, won't be easy.

NWO founders Scott Hall and Kevin Nash look on as Bischoff holds court on the set of *Nitro*. A lot of pressure will be on the WCW senior vice president now that the NWO is becoming a separate organization.

adopted a guerrilla mentality. No longer will they be able to come and go as they please. Can the NWO wrestlers handle the pressure—and the stringent rules—that come with running a wrestling federation?

So far, Bischoff and the NWO have done nothing that suggests they can. But that doesn't seem to matter. Are they up to the challenge? Do they even want the challenge?

"The answer to your second question is yes, definitely," Scott Hall said. "As for your first question, everybody has doubted us all along. They said we were a passing fad and that we'd be gone after like a year. Well, we obviously haven't passed on to anywhere, and all you have to do is look at the crowd for any wrestling show and what do you see? Black NWO shirts. People flashing the NWO sign. Everybody is NWO for life. Enough said."

Enough said? Maybe not. Because, as Hall pointed out, the NWO has become immensely popular, and popularity is a cyclical phenomenon. Sure, it's cool to be an NWO fan. But there are

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT'S NWO VS. NWO?

When Scott Hall won the three-ring battle royal at World War III, he earned a shot at the WCW World title. The WCW World champion at the time happened to be Hulk Hogan. Hall never seriously dealt with the problem inherent in challenging a fellow NWO member, because Hogan had other things on his mind, such as a Starrcade '97 date with Sting.

But what will happen in the future when other NWO wrestlers earn or win matches against NWO champions? How can the NWO, which prides itself on its all-for-one, one-for-all mantra, deal with such an eventuality?

"We'll deal with it," Eric Bischoff said. "It's no problem. NWO wrestlers can wrestle NWO wrestlers. In fact, it's better that way, because who would be more deserving of a match with 'Hollywood' than Hall or Nash? It's perfect. In fact, we'd like to see a situation where only NWO wrestlers can challenge for World titles."

We must hope Bischoff is just dreaming. But Hogan said, "I'd rather not face one of my brothers in the ring," referring to Hall, Nash, and other NWO members. "There'd be nothing to prove."

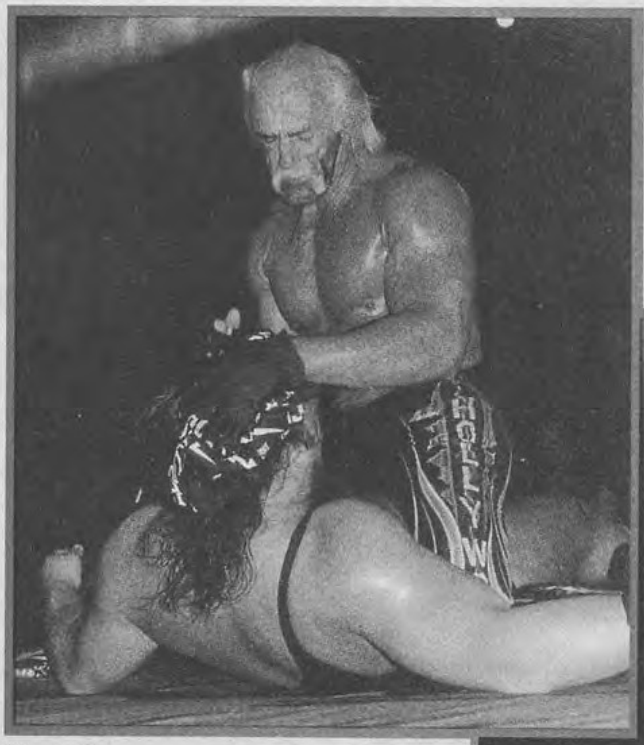
And Hall said: "Sure, I'd wrestle 'Hollywood' sometime. Why not? But it's important we're all on one side and it's important that we stay on one side. There's no use creating dissension where there was none before."

Will Hall and Nash wrestle each other?

So there you have it ... we think. NWO wrestlers can challenge NWO champions. But the NWO isn't too anxious to see it happen.

—Dave Rosenbaum

so many NWO fans that eventually it'll become more cool to be anti-NWO. Wrestling fans today love rebels, but the NWO wrestlers won't be rebels if they have their own official organization.



The Giant was a major player in the development of the NWO until Hogan and company decided he wasn't NWO material. He is one of many WCW wrestlers looking forward to seeing the NWO self-destruct in 1998.

The WCW wrestlers will become the rebels. Then what?

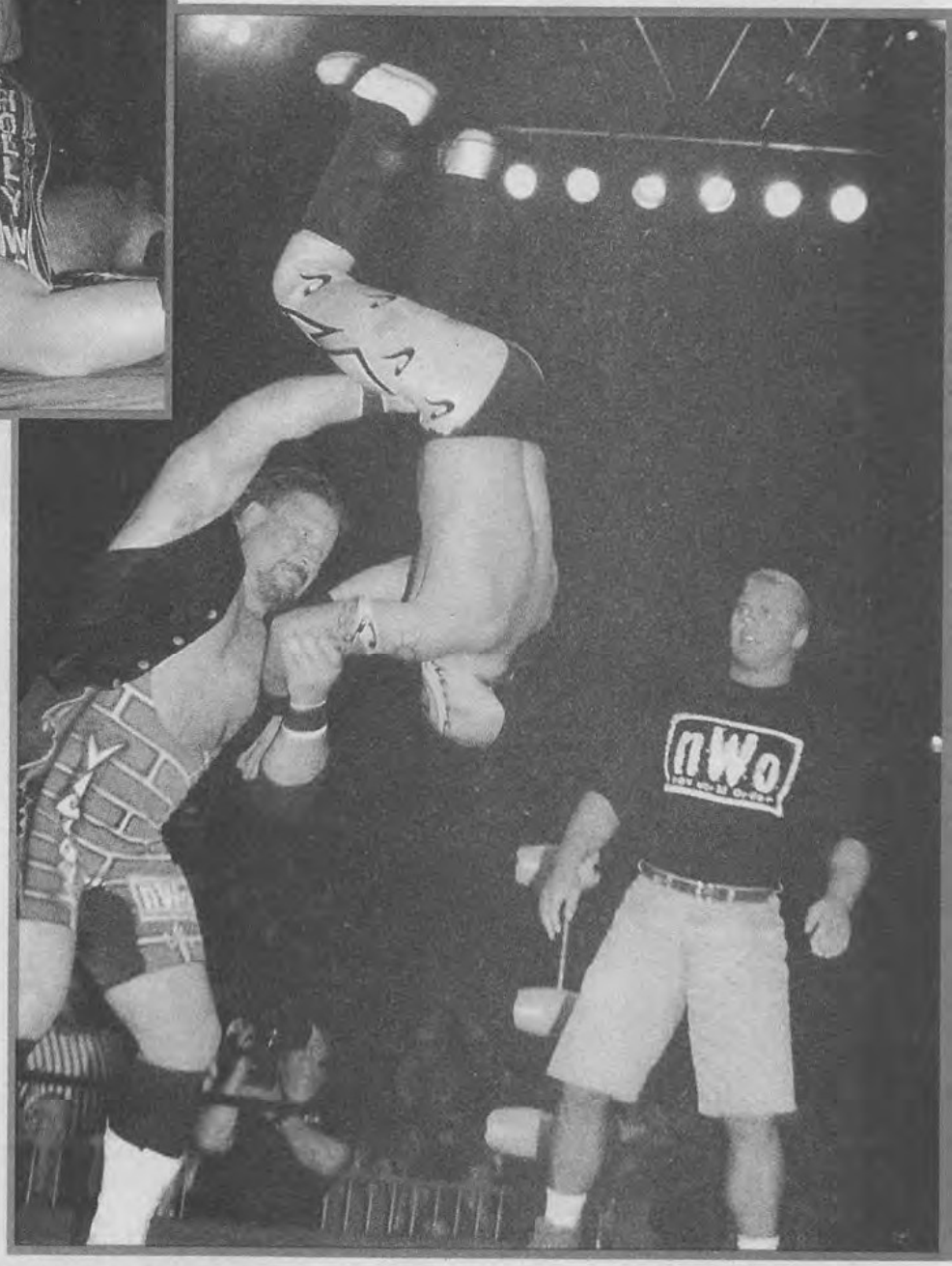
"Popularity will be the NWO's downfall," Ric Flair says. "You can't be cool if everybody's doing what you're doing, and the NWO has always tried to be the coolest. Well, now they're just like everybody else."

But being popular is only part of the equation. Honesty and legitimate conduct would go a long way in validating the NWO. No one will respect his federation if Bischoff runs it like a puppet show. Will he allow other NWO superstars to challenge Hogan if he is the NWO World champion? What happens if NWO titles become meaningless because only NWO wrestlers are allowed to wrestle for them? Will Bischoff enforce the rules without bias?

It remains to be seen how Bischoff intends to legitimize the NWO without compromising the band's outlaw identity. For two years, the NWO has dared to be different. It has dared to take on the status quo and come and go as it pleased. It has dared to make challenges and rule with an aura of intimidation. But the success the NWO demanded has now put it in danger of becoming what it has always detested. With a few wrong moves, the NWO could become like any other federation. And then the NWO, as it likes to know itself, will cease to exist.

"Don't bet on it," Nash said. "Don't count us out. We're about to change the way people view wrestling."

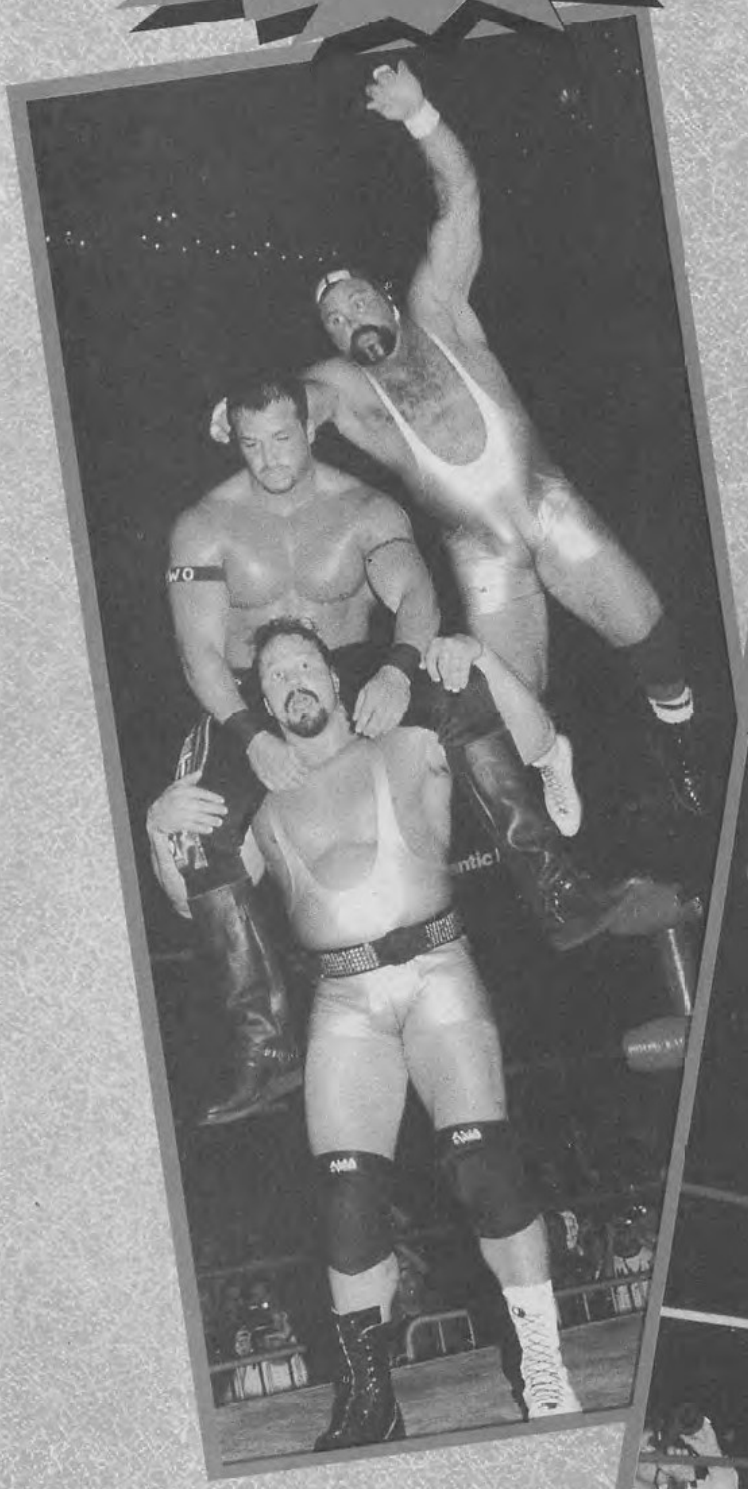
Haven't they already done that? If they do it again, can't it only be for the worse? □

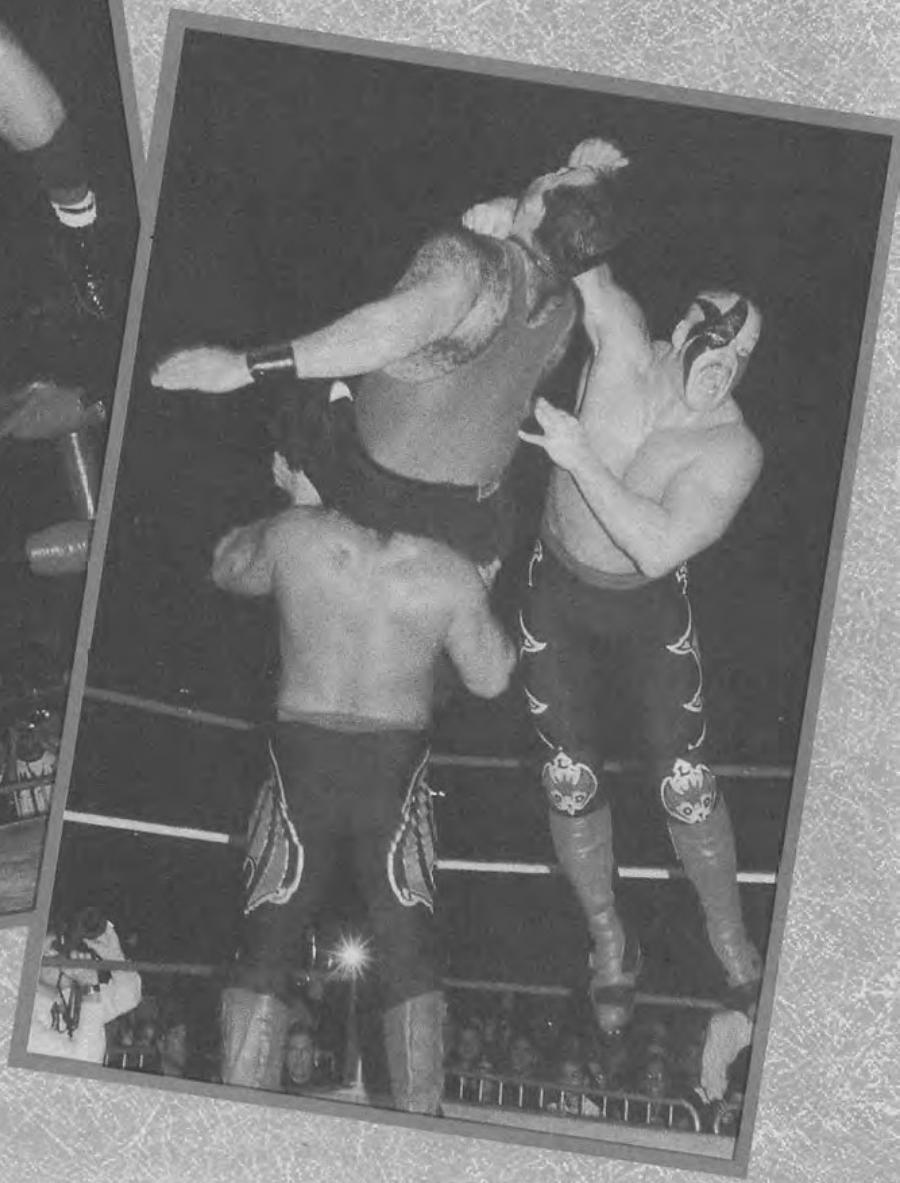


Curt Hennig sticks around just in case his NWO brother Scott Norton has any problems with the diminutive Rey Misterio Jr. How tight will NWO members remain if they have to wrestle each other?

Special Analysis:

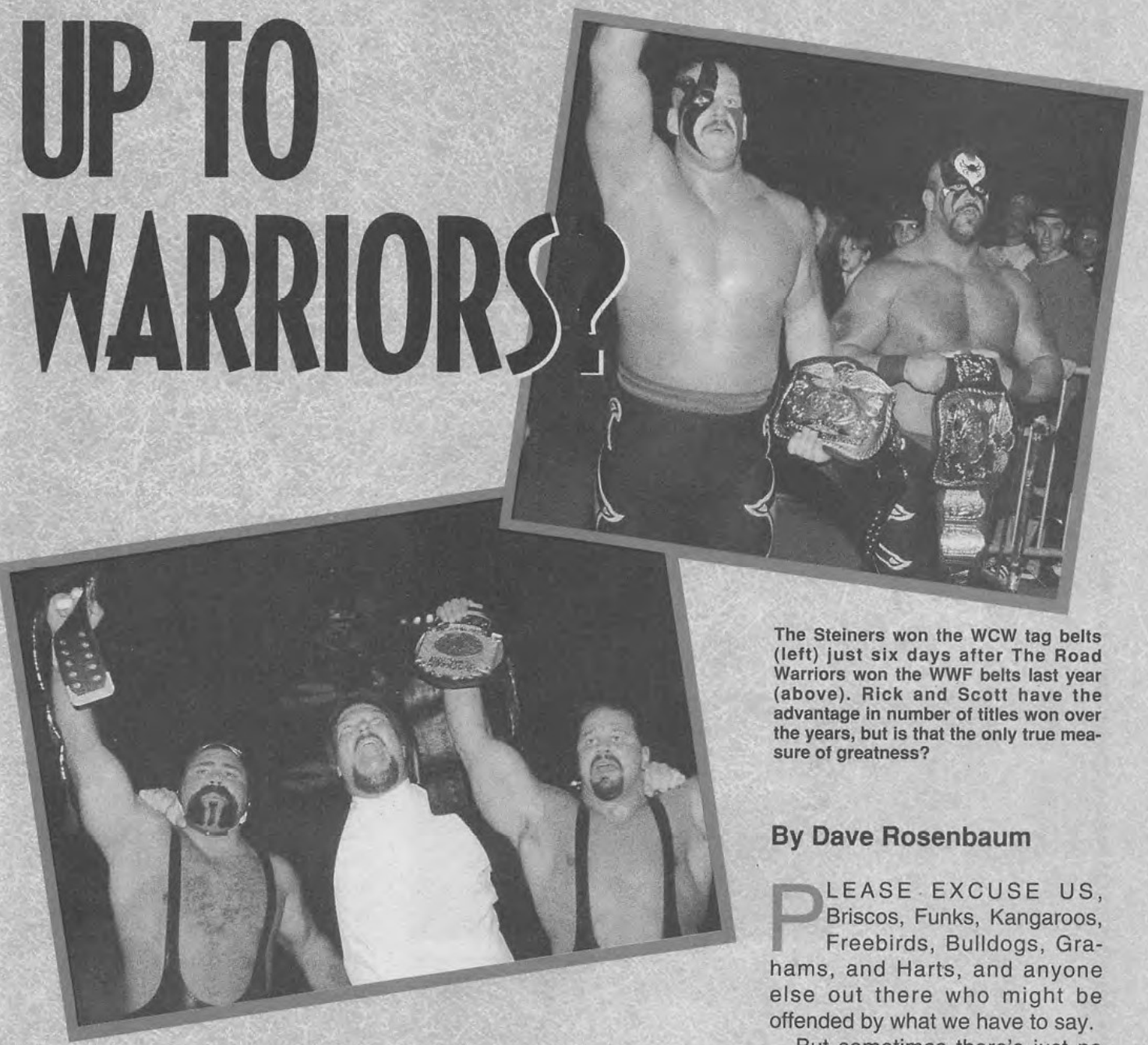
HAVE THE CAUGHT THE ROAD





The Steiners (above) and Road Warriors (above right) use some similar moves, but they have established their legacies in different ways. Head-to-head battles can help us establish which team his better now, but might not help us decide which is the best of all-time.

STEINERS FINALLY UP TO WARRIORS?



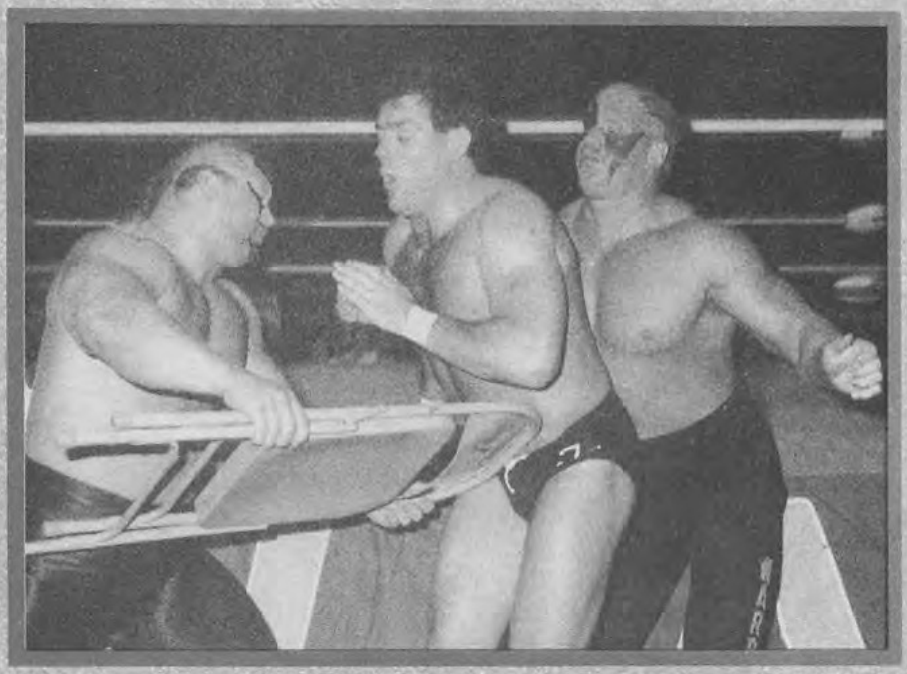
The Steiners won the WCW tag belts (left) just six days after The Road Warriors won the WWF belts last year (above). Rick and Scott have the advantage in number of titles won over the years, but is that the only true measure of greatness?

From the early-1980s until the present, Animal and Hawk have defined dominance in tag team wrestling. But the Steiners are on the move

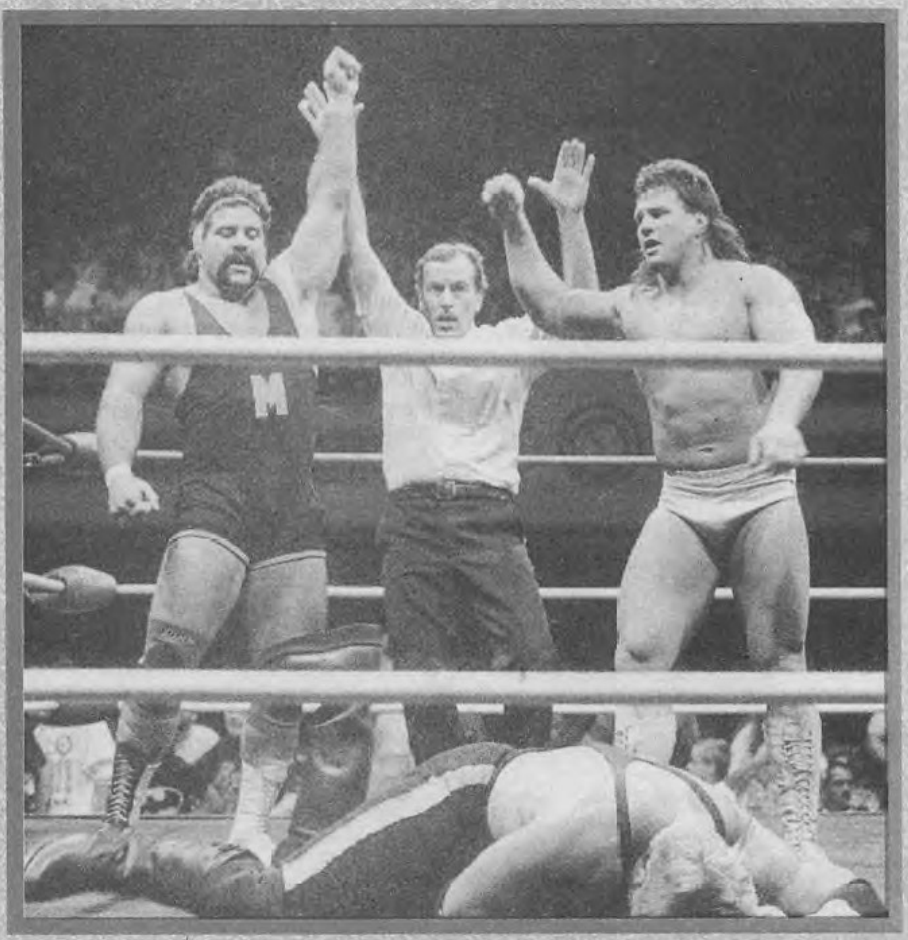
By Dave Rosenbaum

PLEASE EXCUSE US, Briscos, Funks, Kangaroos, Freebirds, Bulldogs, Grahams, and Harts, and anyone else out there who might be offended by what we have to say.

But sometimes there's just no getting around the truth. In the 1980s, and for part of the '90s, The Road Warriors were such a dominant tag team that they overshadowed all other duos in wrestling history. No offense, tag teams of the past, but if you got into the ring with Animal and Hawk during those days, you'd lose. In fact, you'd probably get



By the time they began torturing Tully Blanchard in the NWA in 1988 (above), Animal and Hawk had already established themselves as the world's most dominant duo. The Steiners had not accomplished that much as a team by 1989 (below).



trampled in less than five minutes.

The Warriors are the only tag team in history to win world tag team titles in the WWF, WCW, and the old AWA. They were the team by which all others were measured. They were the most feared. The most dominant. The greatest box office draws in the history of tag team wrestling.

Time, however, tends to catch up to even the greatest wrestlers and tag teams, and the Warriors showed signs of wear when they lost the WWF belts to Billy Gunn and Jesse James, even though it was by no means a clean victory for the underdogs. Years ago, however, the Warriors never would have lost to Gunn and James under any circumstances, unless maybe a ton of bricks fell on their heads.

Time changes everything. And maybe it's changed this, too: The Road Warriors may no longer be the greatest tag team of all-time. That honor might have been passed to Rick and Scott Steiner, a duo that's been going strong since the early-'90s.

Have the Steiners finally caught up to the Warriors?

"Of course we have," Rick Steiner said. "We passed them a long time ago. It's about time somebody gave us the respect we deserve."

Hawk, of course, sees things a little differently.

"Are we what we used to be?" Hawk said. "No. We're better. We're smarter. We used to just storm into the ring and try to get our matches over with as quickly as possible. Now we think about what we're doing. If any team out there thinks they've passed us, they'd better think again. And if those punks think they're the greatest tag team of all-time, then maybe the time has come for us to get into the ring and rumble once and for all."

Sounds great to us. But until one of the two teams switches federations, here's how the matchup looks on paper.

MAJOR TITLES WON: The Warriors have won four world tag team titles (two WWF, one NWA, one AWA). The Steiners have won seven (five NWA/WCW, two WWF). The Steiners have won more in a shorter period of time. Undoubtedly, the one knock against The Legion of Doom is that they haven't won as many

belts as their dominance suggests they should have.

"Let me tell you something, brother," said Capt. Lou Albano, the greatest tag team manager of all-time, "there's only one measure of greatness. Winning the gold makes you the best. My vote goes to the Steiners." **ADVANTAGE:** Steiners.

YEARS OF DOMINANCE: Animal and Hawk dominated the AWA, the NWA, then the WWF, from the mid-1980s to the early-1990s. They destroyed a lot of opponents during that stretch. It's rare that a team stays together for so long. The Steiners have been an outstanding, but not dominant team since the late-1980s, and also took a few years off because of injuries. In the late-'80s, the Warriors rarely lost a match, were never cleanly pinned, and had a stranglehold on the top spot in the tag team ratings.

The Road Warriors dominated their feud with the Godwinns last year, but almost everyone agrees that the quality of opposition they've faced since returning to the WWF hasn't been great. The mere fact that they're still a team after more than a decade together is an achievement in itself.

Scott Steiner armdrags Buff Bagwell. The Steiners are considered two of WCW's strongest weapons in the war with the NWO and have been facing some very tough competition recently.

"By this very subjective measure, the Warriors have been the most dominant tag team in wrestling history," said Publisher Stu Saks. "But it is purely subjective. Some people might say titles won is the most important factor, and some might say it's being the number-one tag team in the world." **ADVANTAGE:** Warriors.

YEAR-END ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS: The Road Warriors have been named *PWI's* Tag Team of the Year four times. The Steiners have been named *PWI's* Tag Team of the Year twice. But the Warriors won their awards from 1983-1985 and in 1988. The Steiners won in 1990 and 1993.

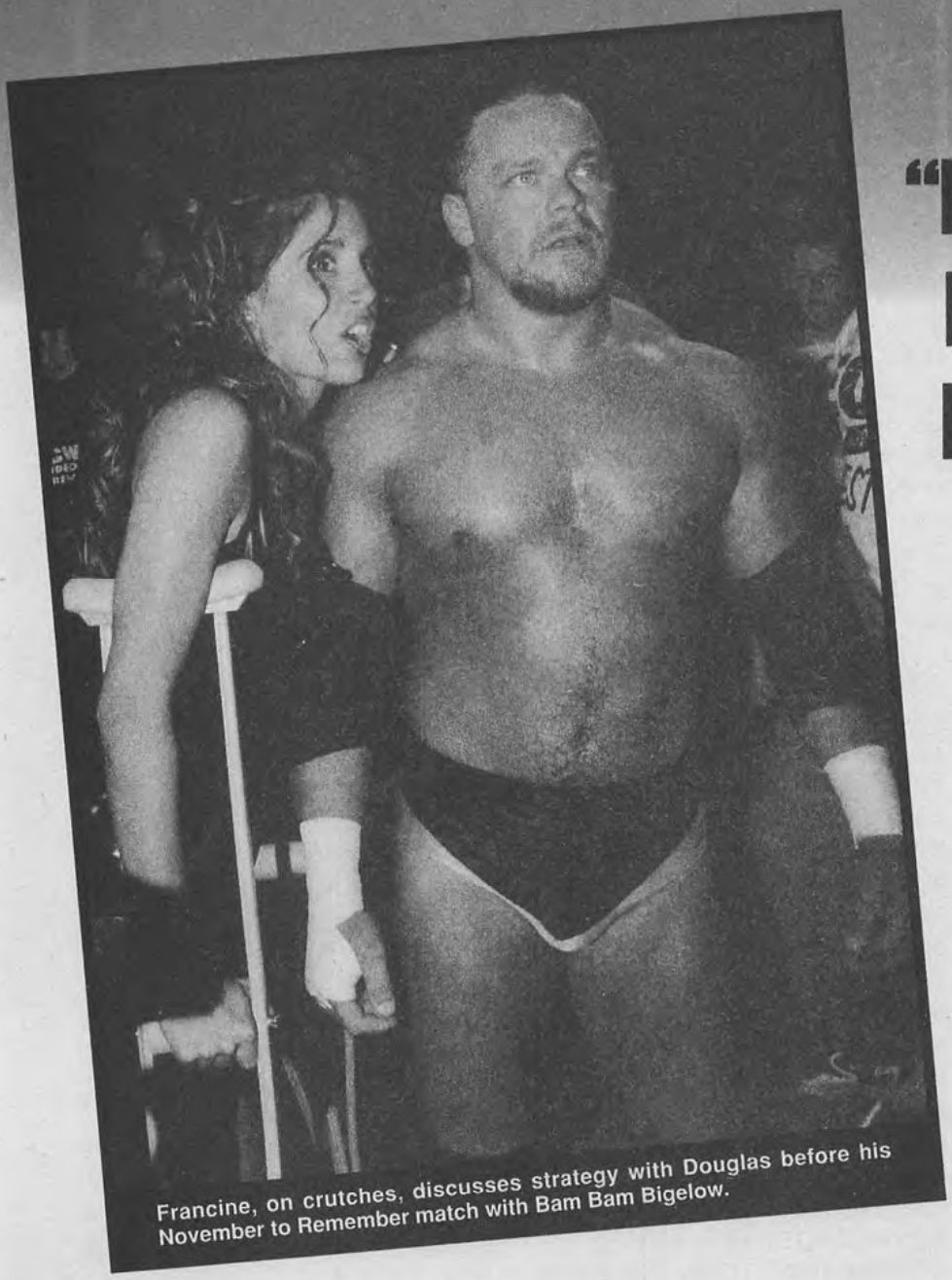
But before you start calling either team yesterday's news, remember that both the Steiners and the Warriors held world team tag belts in 1997 (the Steiners were WCW champs at press time) and finished two-three in voting for Tag Team of the Year. **ADVANTAGE:** Warriors.

FEAR FACTOR: Face the Steiners and there's a fear of losing. Face the Warriors and there's still a fear of leaving the ring with serious injuries, though it's not as strong as it once was. The Warriors are intimidating. They win big. The Steiners usually just win. **ADVANTAGE:** Warriors.

Over the past few years—remember, the Warriors took nearly four years off as a team in the 1990s as Animal suffered from back problems—the Warriors have faced lesser competition. They were *so* dominant in the '80s that even though the Steiners have been at the top of their game for longer, their level of dominance hasn't equaled that of the Warriors. The Steiners have faced superior competition, but they have not kept up an intense schedule.

So what does this tell us? The Road Warriors are the greatest of all-time ... for now. But there's still time. If the Steiners continue their current pace, they have an excellent chance of becoming wrestling's greatest tag team ever. Check back in about two years. For now, it's Legion of Doom. □

HOW FRANCINE'S PAIN INSPIRED SHANE!



Francine, on crutches, discusses strategy with Douglas before his November to Remember match with Bam Bam Bigelow.

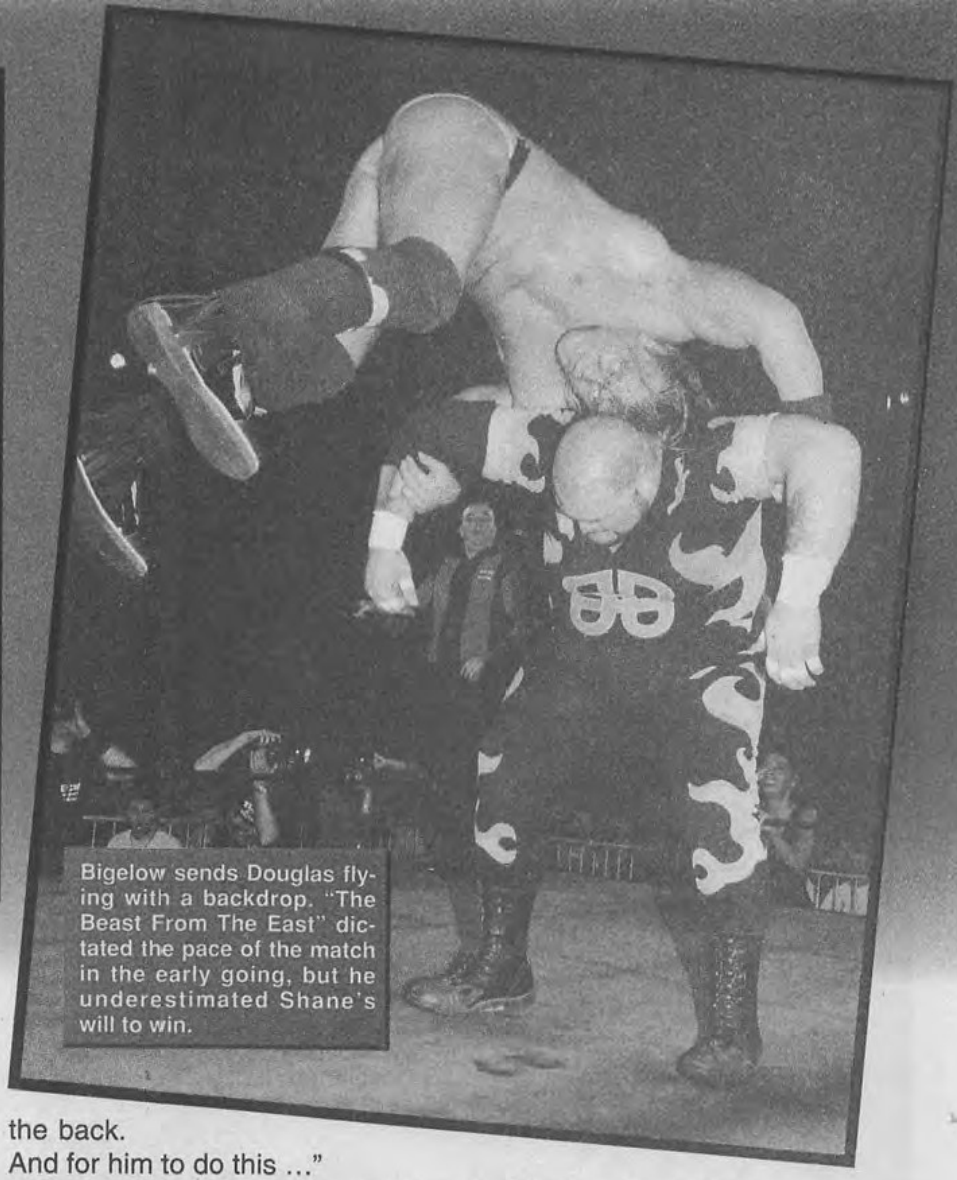
"No Man Will Ever Touch Her Again!"

By Dan Murphy

SHANE DOUGLAS IS like most other people in this world. He doesn't like hospitals. He hates the sounds and the smells. "The Franchise" has spent more nights in sleepless pain than he can remember, even if he cared to, and the cold, sterile atmosphere of a hospital only seems to aggravate his injuries.

Predictably, Douglas was apprehensive when he entered a Philadelphia hospital early in the morning of November 9, three weeks before his November to Remember ECW title match against champion Bam Bam Bigelow. This time, however, Douglas wouldn't be unnerved by groaning patients or beeping machines. This time, he was only

Not many people sympathized with Francine, Shane Douglas' cheerleader, when Bam Bam Bigelow fractured her pelvis by bodyslamming her. Even Douglas himself didn't spend much time feeling bad for her. He was too busy plotting revenge



Bigelow sends Douglas flying with a backdrop. "The Beast From The East" dictated the pace of the match in the early going, but he underestimated Shane's will to win.

Photos by John S. Pithers

a visitor, and he knew he could walk out of the hospital whenever he felt like it.

But that freedom was no consolation for Douglas as he waited to see his head cheerleader, Francine, who was being treated for a fractured pelvis she suffered just hours earlier.

Sitting in the sanitized waiting room for what felt like an eternity gave Douglas plenty of time to stew over the recent turn of humiliating events.

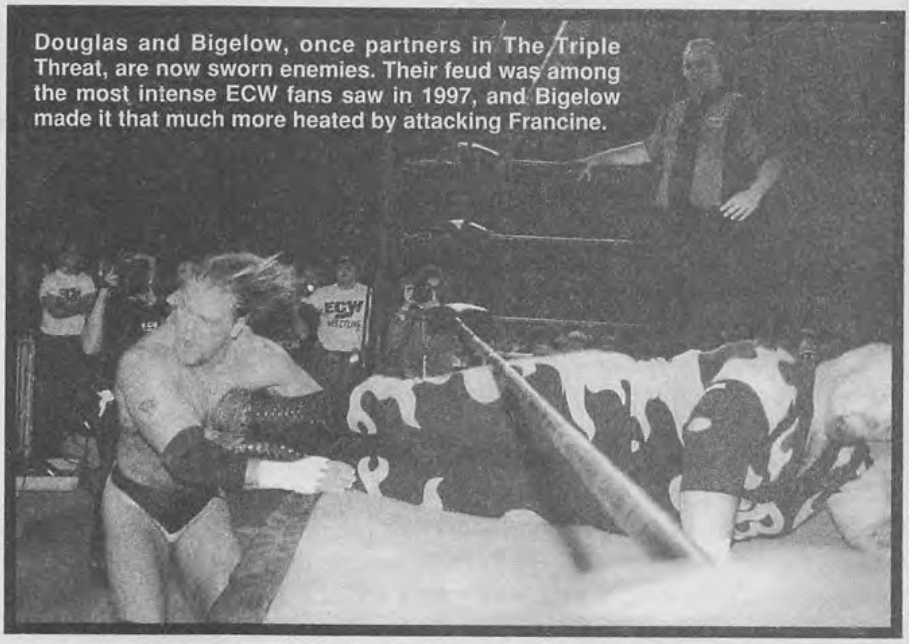
Not only did he lose to Bigelow that night, but he had to suffer the indignity of watching Francine get slammed by "The Beast From The East."

"Bigelow is the biggest coward this sport has ever seen, and I promise you, I'm going to cripple that dirtbag for Francine," Douglas exclaimed. "I brought Bigelow into ECW and gave him the opportunity of a lifetime here. Leave it to him to use me and The Triple Threat and then stab us in the back.

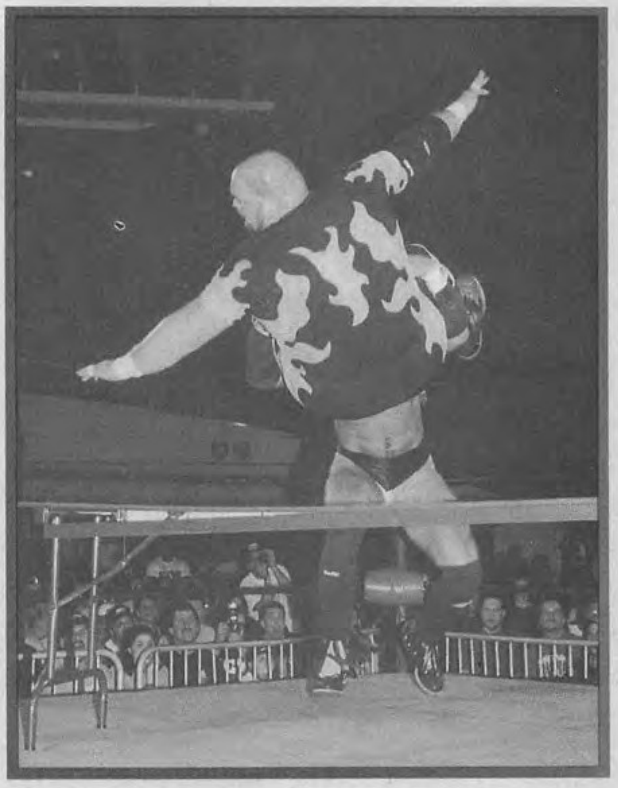
And for him to do this ..."

Douglas shook his head. "Bigelow will learn a lesson, one that everyone in ECW better learn right away. No man will ever touch Francine again!"

Given the federation's violent history and the tendency of most of the men in ECW to treat rival



Douglas and Bigelow, once partners in The Triple Threat, are now sworn enemies. Their feud was among the most intense ECW fans saw in 1997, and Bigelow made it that much more heated by attacking Francine.



Douglas, drawing inspiration from Francine's injury, reverses his rival's momentum (above left) and sends the larger, stronger Bigelow through a broken table (above right). He went on to pin Bigelow to capture his fourth ECW title (left), and he dedicated it to Francine.

valets, managers, and cheerleaders with no respect whatsoever, Douglas has made a promise he will find difficult to keep. Francine has been especially aggressive with her interference during the last two years.

Her persistence will likely prompt another attack, according to one former ECW champion. "I know it ain't right to be slappin' ladies around, but that girl can be downright dangerous," said Terry Funk, who nearly had a chunk of his ear viciously bitten off by Francine this summer.

Like Funk, many of Douglas' opponents answer Francine's tactics with a menacing swat or with idle threats. But Bigelow, who has a nasty temper, responded with a powerful bodyslam. With the petite seductress incapacitated, Bigelow was able to pin Douglas in the center of the ring on November 8.

Bigelow's conduct that night raised a question that people associated with the sport have been asking for years: If federation officials do nothing to deter valets or managers from getting physically involved in matches, are male wrestlers justified in defending themselves using any means necessary?

"Of course not," Triple Threat member Chris Candido said. "That big goon is close to 400 pounds. Francine weighs a little over 100 pounds. You do the math!"

Justified or not, Bigelow certainly isn't the first male wrestler to strike a female valet. Hulk Hogan

has atomic-dropped an interfering Sherri Martel. Tommy Dreamer would often piledrive Beulah McGillicutty while she was aligned with Raven. Even Ricky "The Dragon" Steamboat once struck Madusa while she was aligned with The Dangerous Alliance.

But on the night of the Francine-Bigelow incident, Douglas wasn't interested in the history of wrestler-valet violence. All he cared about was protecting Francine and making Bam Bam pay for what he did.

"Francine is the toughest woman I've ever met," he said. "She's been abused by the fans and by other wrestlers for far too long. And it all ends right now! I'll get my belt back for sure at November to Remember. I'll do it for Francine."

Perhaps tougher than Douglas realizes, Francine was released from the hospital the following day. As she hobbled away on crutches, she was adamant in her desire to return to Douglas' side for his pay-per-view rematch with "The Beast From The East."

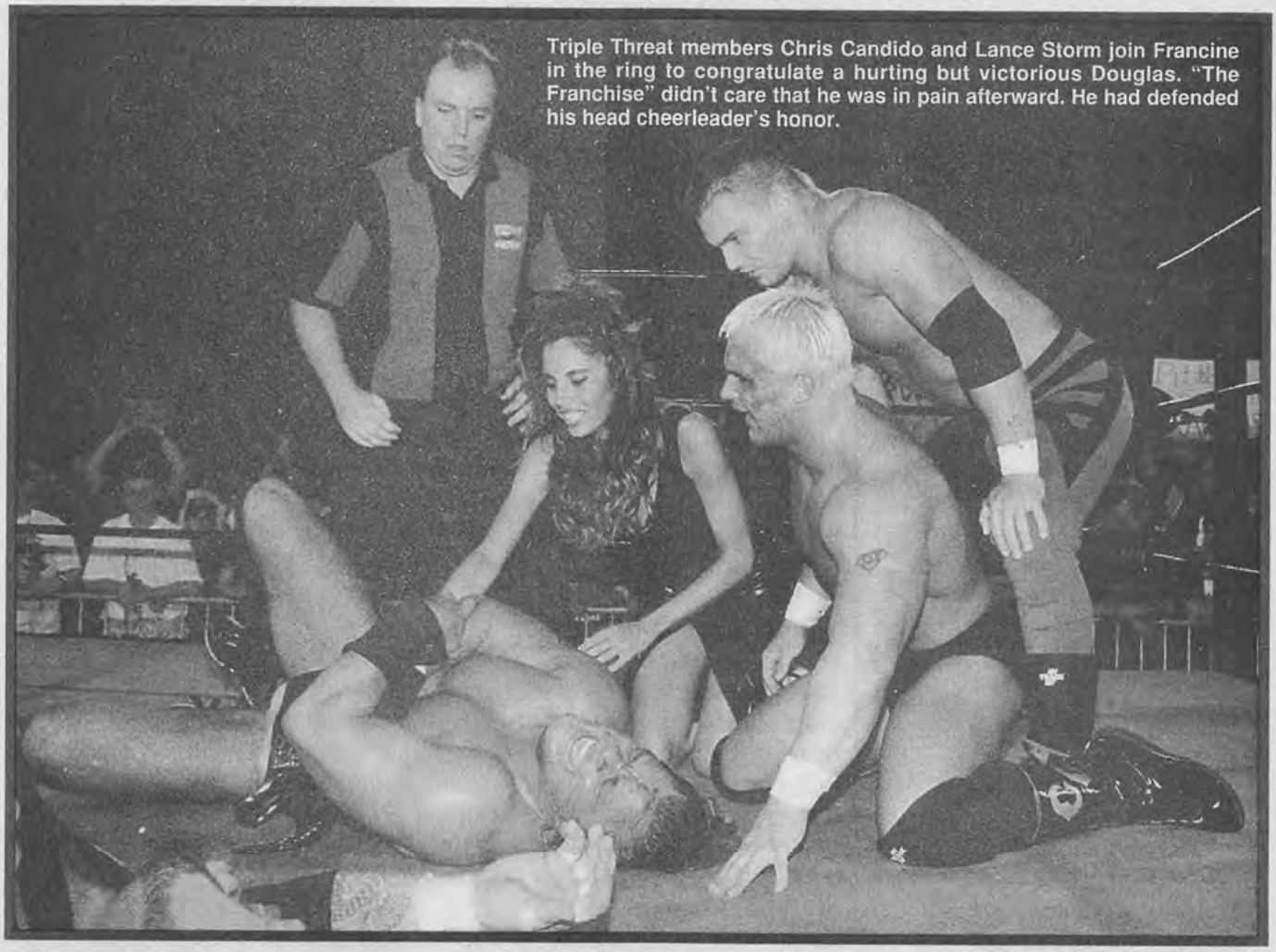
But when the two met 21 days later, it looked like Douglas would need more than determination to beat Bigelow, who battered him with forearm smashes and bodyslams. When Candido and Lance Storm came to ringside, Bigelow hoisted Douglas over his head and threw him out of the ring on top of them and a group of security guards.

With the rest of The Triple Threat down and out, Francine, who apparently didn't learn her lesson, waffled Bigelow with a crutch. Unfazed, the big man ignored her and continued his assault on Douglas. He tried to end the match by dropping Douglas through a broken table.

As Bigelow prepared to finish him off, Douglas caught sight of Francine at ringside. She was willing him to win with every fiber of her being. Feeling empowered, Douglas reversed the champion's momentum and drove Bigelow through the table with a brutal belly-to-belly suplex.

Three mat slaps later, Douglas began his fourth reign as ECW champion. And as Francine, on crutches, held the ECW title above her head, Douglas gave the hand sign of The Triple Threat.

With the ECW title reclaimed, the message was sent to everyone in the locker room. "This is our belt," Douglas said after the match, drawing Francine close to him as he iced his elbow. "Bigelow can try to hurt me all he wants. I'm in a lot of pain right now. But he paid the price for hurting my head cheerleader. And I guarantee, if anyone tries to do that again, they'll be the ones spending time in the hospital." □



Triple Threat members Chris Candido and Lance Storm join Francine in the ring to congratulate a hurting but victorious Douglas. "The Franchise" didn't care that he was in pain afterward. He had defended his head cheerleader's honor.

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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 5)

lady wrestlers like Vicki Williams, who used to wrestle barefoot!

TOM YOCKLEY JR.
St. Charles, MO

BYE-BYE, WWF!

I was disgusted to learn that the WWF just sat there and allowed Bret "Hitman" Hart to sign with WCW after 14 years in the organization. I have been a huge fan of Bret since the '80s, and he is the main reason I watched the WWF over WCW. He is the best wrestler the WWF has ever produced and to let him leave was just not fair to the fans.

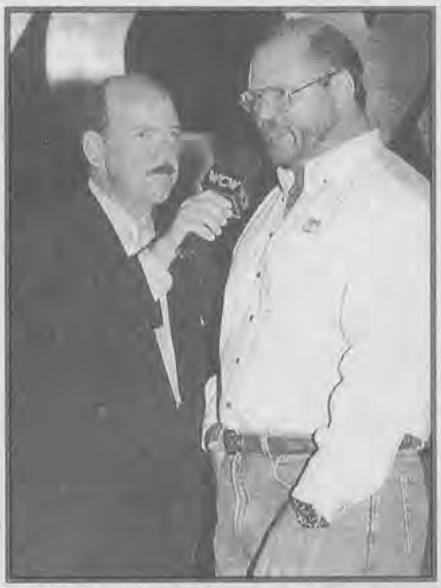
Expect the WWF's TV ratings to drop over the next few months, because I, along with many other faithful Bret Hart fans, will be heading south for WCW. It was bad enough when Scott Hall and Kevin Nash left, but Bret Hart leaving could be the final nail in the coffin for the WWF.

DANIEL JIMENEZ
Downers Grove, IL

I would like to offer an apology of sorts to Bret Hart. In recent months, I have criticized the "Hitman" for his anti-American tirades and what I perceived to be his whining over so-called unfair treatment by WWF officials. I still don't approve of his attitude toward the United States, but his allegations of wrongdoing by the WWF have proven to be true. This was made clear at Survivor Series.

The reason for Vince McMahon's vendetta against Hart isn't important to me. By alienating Hart, McMahon forced his top draw out of the federation, and that decision might ultimately put him out of business. For the WWF's sake, I hope Vince is a lot nicer to Shawn Michaels and Steve Austin.

DAVID MILLER
Oaktown, IN



Arn Anderson has made occasional appearances on WCW telecasts since announcing his retirement. Reader Sandy Dugan would like to see a lot more of him.

ONE MORE RIDE?

It's a shame that Arn Anderson seems so happy in his retirement ("Q & A," January 1998). If WCW ever needed Arn Anderson, it is now. Even if he can't wrestle anymore, he could still be an asset to the organization. Anderson has plenty of old friends in WCW—men like Ric Flair and Larry Zbyszko—and new guys like Chris Benoit and Steve McMichael would, I'm sure, love to have him as an adviser or manager. Perhaps he could settle his scores with Kevin Nash and Curt Hennig—two wrestlers who have gone out of their way to publicly humiliate him and Flair—through guys like McMichael and Benoit.

WCW doesn't need The Four Horsemen to reunite. They just need somebody to lead the troops against the NWO. Anderson certainly has the credentials. Maybe soon Arn will get tired of watching his friends get mugged by NWO flunkies.

SANDY DUGAN
Charlotte, NC ☐

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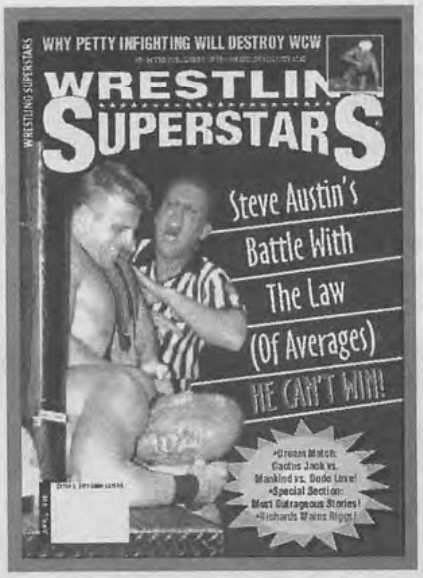

STEVE AUSTIN thinks he can win any battle he gets himself into, but we're betting against him in his battle with the law of averages. Sooner or later, someone will reinjure his spine. Maybe retirement isn't such a bad option … Don't miss our special analysis of why petty in-fighting will destroy WCW … We've given you some unusual "Dream Matches" over the years, but none as outlandish as a triple threat match pitting **CACTUS JACK** against **MANKIND** against **DUDE LOVE**! … Did **THE BROOKLYN BRAWLER** actually come close to winning the WWF title?

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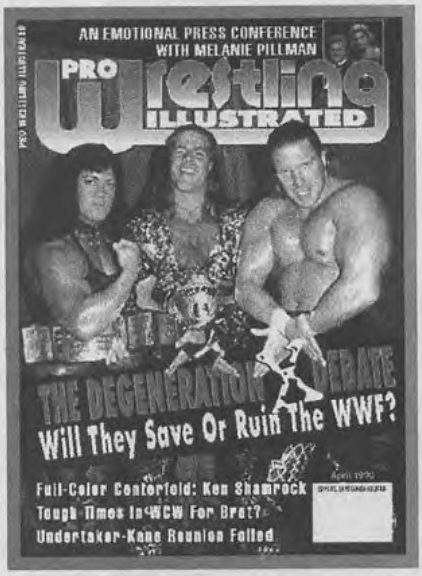

DEGENERATION X—they're lewd, crude, and controversial. Are **SHAWN MICHAELS**, **HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY**, and **CHYNA** good for the WWF, or will they ultimately destroy it? We do an in-depth examination of this issue … It's been a few months since the tragic death of **BRIAN PILLMAN**, and it hasn't been easy for his widow, **MELANIE**. She discusses Brian's life, his death, how all her children are coping, and so much more in what is perhaps the most emotional "Press Conference" we have ever done … Don't miss our full-color centerfold of **KEN SHAMROCK**

All this—and much more!—in the April 1998 issue of ***Pro Wrestling Illustrated***

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from page 7)

Disco Inferno won't have to worry about Miss Jacquelyn anymore, as she has left WCW. Her next stop could be the WWF; she'd love to get a match or two with Chyna.

He says he will be in good shape financially because he still plans to start a video game business in the Philadelphia area ... Richards' former mentor, **Raven**, has been having his share of health problems, too. He missed several weeks of matches due to an inflamed pancreas.

Jacquelyn has left WCW, but she knows where she'd like to turn up next. "When you're in this sport, you watch as much wrestling as you can," she says. "I've seen that **Chyna** person in the WWF a lot. She's always attacking guys, but she doesn't get into the ring for one-on-one action. If I ever had a problem with a guy, I got in there and kicked his butt in a match. She looks real tough, but how tough would she be if she had to face me? I'd like to find out."

Said Chyna: "If she expects to make her reputation by coming here and beating me, I'd tell her not to waste her time. I'll squeeze the life out of her little body!"

The Blood Angels won the vacant Jersey All-Pro Wrestling tag team title in a bloody barbed-wire match with **The Nation of Immigration** ... The Canadian Wrestling Federation's **Jackie Youngblood** has told **Caveman Broda** that he's no longer interested in teaming with him and will be pursuing a solo career ... **Junkyard Dog** is wrestling for Mid-South Sports in Louisiana, where he's been teaming with **Kevin Northlitt** and feuding with **The Infernos** ... **Colt Rivers** has won the North American Wrestling Alliance Intercontinental title from **Ruckus**.

Tokyo's Olympic Park Gym recently hosted a joint FMW/ECW card highlighted by **Terry Funk's** victory over **The Sandman** and **Buh Buh Ray Dudley** in a three-way dance. Although he fought a valiant battle, ECW's **Tommy Dreamer** lost a tough one to **The Gladiator** on the same card, while **D-Von Dudley** racked up a win for ECW against **Ricky Fuji**.

Since dropping the **Salvatore Sincere** persona, **Tom Brandi** has also dropped a title. He relinquished the IPWA heavyweight championship because he didn't believe he'd have much time to defend it. "I won't quit the independent scene completely, but I can't be tied down with mandatory title defenses," he said.

Brandi is also trying to get **Marc Mero** to treat **Sable** better. "Hey, she's a classy lady, and he treats her like garbage," he told me. "There's no reason for it. I'm no knight in shining armor, but if he keeps up, I'll be happy to defend her honor."

That's what's happening. I'll see you at the matches! □

Fans of the IPWA won't get to see too much of Tom Brandi in the near future. He gave up that federation's heavyweight title so he could concentrate more on his WWF career.

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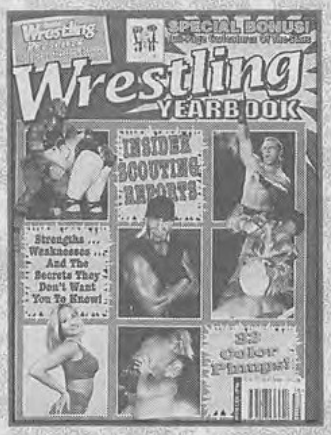

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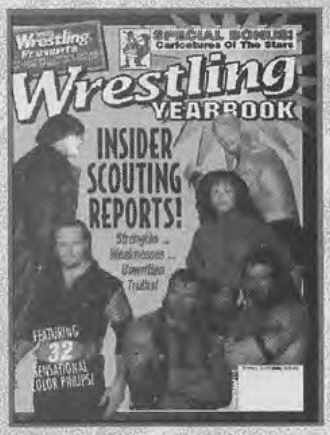

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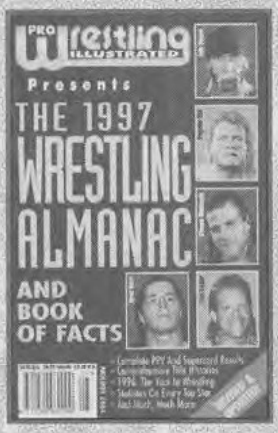

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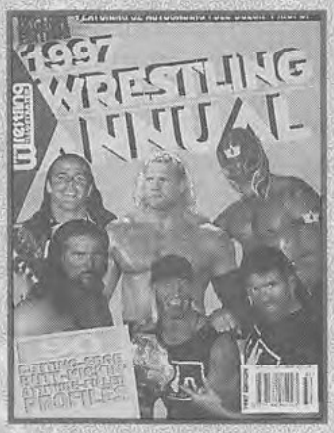

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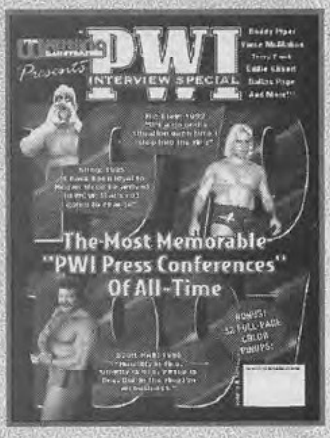

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(Continued from page 8)

been waiting for over an hour."

"And you'll continue to wait," Animal chimed in. "We ain't doing interviews right now. Got it?"

"But we scheduled this weeks ago and—"

"That was then. this is now," interrupted Hawk. "A lot has happened since then. Let's just say that we don't feel like talking and leave it at that."

They started to walk away. "What's going on?" I yelled.

They stopped walking and turned to look at each other. Menacingly, they turned back toward me. It isn't often that I feel totally intimidated when dealing with wrestlers, but this time I began to wonder if I was taking things a bit too far with two men in bad moods who could break me in two without making much of an effort.

"You know something, Anderson? You're not hiding behind a keyboard or a drawing table right now," Animal said as we stood nose-to-nose. "This is real life. Our lives. Not a nice little story. Not a stinkin' cartoon."

With every syllable, Animal poked a beefy finger into my chest. The pain was excruciating, but I didn't let him know that my sternum was about to collapse. I stared back at him, hoping he wouldn't smell fear or see the beads of sweat forming rapidly on my forehead.

From the corner of my eye, I could see Hawk smirking. "More guts than brains. My kind of guy. All right, Anderson, five minutes. What's on your brain?"

"You've won and lost many tag team titles in your career," I stated. "But this one seemed different. That loss coupled with the attack has seemed to affect you two more than other setbacks have in the past. Why?"

Animal has Jesse James in trouble here, but James and his tag team partner, Billy Gunn, have caused The Road Warriors a lot more trouble in recent months. Who would have believed that would ever happen?

"You want to know why?" answered Animal. "Because we didn't come back to the WWF—hell, even wrestling—for this kind of crap. We're The Legion of Doom, and for us to allow four punks to do what they did to us, as you say, *affects* us."

Hawk pulled off his do-rag to expose his cleanly shaved head. "Look at me. No one does this to The Road Warriors. You want to see the X-rays of Animal's back? When we first broke in, no one dared to even breathe in our direction, let alone try to embarrass us like this. It stops right here!"

"Time for us to get back where we belong," said Animal. "We've heard what you journalists and fans have been saying. We're getting soft. We're not what we used to be. We did everything we could to quiet that crap. But it wasn't enough."

"What does this mean?" I asked. "You're turning bad?"

"Is there a difference?" asked Hawk. "Fans don't care about rules. People who run the WWF don't care about rules. Why should we? It's time for us to stop worrying about how our face paint looks or if our shoulder pads are on right. We can't worry about cheers or merchandise sales anymore."

"Wrestling has changed, and we need to change with it to survive," Animal ominously added.

"What exactly are you trying to say?" I asked again.

"You're the reporter," said Hawk. "You figure it out."

With that, they walked away. I knew what they were talking about. The old Road Warriors had shock value and a surprise element incorporated into their ring style. That's what was gone. That's what they're looking for through fair means or foul. A different era has started for The Road Warriors.

Good for them. □

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10. Village Meanies
9. Boo Berry
8. Blutus Meaniemus
7. I Dream of Meanie
6. Meanie Babies
5. Ruptured Spleeny
4. Meanie in Blue
3. Moo Bleanie
2. Chico and the Meanie
1. TV's Blue-pers and Practical Meanies

CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS

(Continued from page 14)

Tommy Dreamer had both Sabu and Rob Van Dam in serious trouble during a tag team match at the ECW Arena. But his good fortune ran out when Stevie Richards lent Sabu and Van Dam a helping foot.

splash and scored the three-count. Bundy, however, demanded a five-count. Bronsky, who suffered bruised ribs and injuries to his back and shoulder from the chair, still could not kick out.

In other bouts: Reckless Youth used the ropes for extra leverage in order to pin Mike Quackenbush. Quackenbush then demanded a rematch, and promoters agreed to sign a no-disqualification match and a falls-count-anywhere match for a best-of-three series that night ... R.C. Luv'n pinned American Patriot ... Doug Flex defeated Cueball Carmichael ... Mike Quackenbush beat Reckless Youth in a no-disqualification match ... The Twin Tackles defeated The Masked Mutilator & Big Slam ... Julio Sanchez beat Frank Stalletto by disqualification ... Mike Quackenbush pinned Reckless Youth in a falls-count-anywhere match ... Gene Snisky won a $1,000 battle royal by eliminating Frank Stalletto.

Philadelphia, PA *(Correspondent—Mike Travis):* What was supposed to be a match pitting Tommy Dreamer and The Sandman against Sabu and Rob Van Dam at the ECW Arena eventually turned into Dreamer and Taz vs. Sabu and Van Dam. However, Stevie Richards proved to be the key player in the bout, as his interference led directly to a win for Van Dam and Sabu.

Sandman and Dreamer began the match by slide-kicking their opponents out of the ring. Sabu retaliated with a flying sidekick on Dreamer before tossing him into the crowd. Later, though, Sabu and Van Dam got tangled up in the ropes. This left both men open to an attack by Dreamer and Sandman, who nailed them with a ladder. But Sabu and Van Dam were able to fight back even after they were simultaneously piledriven by Sandman and Dreamer.

Unfortunately, Sandman's evening ended after Sabu rammed his head into a ladder. Shortly after that happened, he was carried out of the ring and Taz jumped in to take his place.

Taz immediately suplexed Van Dam twice. As Dreamer brought the ladder into the ring and started to climb it, though, Taz stopped him and climbed the ladder himself instead. Taz then flipped from the top onto Van Dam, putting him through a table. Just as Taz appeared ready to get the win for his team, Richards ran into the ring and nailed him with a superkick, giving Sabu a chance to lock the Tazmission on Taz. Van Dam then splashed the distracted and dazed Dreamer and got the pinfall win.

In other bouts: Tommy Rogers & Jerry Lynn defeated Tracey Smothers & Little Guido ... Mikey Whipwreck pinned Justin Credible ... Al Snow defeated Paul Diamond ... Chris Candido & Lance Storm won a three-way dance over Axl Rotten & B. Mahoney and ECW tag team champions Doug Furnas & Phil Lafon to win the tag team title ... Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley defeated New Jack & Spike Dudley ... Stevie Richards beat Chris Chetti. □

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YOU ASKED US

(Continued from page 16)

replied. "But wrestling is a whole other world. To gain the respect of the toughest men on the planet, you have to earn it. No one's going to back down from you if you don't give them a reason to. You can talk tough all you want, but if you can't back it up with action, it's worthless. My match against Hunter Hearst Helmsley was a one-time deal, and while he may have gotten the win that night, I see him thinking twice from now on before he goes out and breaks the rules I set down. And if he or anyone else in the WWF for that matter think they can walk over me, I'm going to make sure I've got something to say about it!"

• • •

Q: "I have a question for Francine, the manager of The Triple Threat in ECW: Even though you suffered that pelvis injury at the hands of Bam Bam Bigelow, it seems as if you're even more intent on trying to get in the ring to interfere. Aren't you worried that you could be even more seriously hurt next time a wrestler doesn't like your interference?" —Brandon Mendoza, Tampa, FL

A: "Why should I be afraid of anyone in ECW when I've got 'The Franchise' Shane Douglas, Chris Candido, and Lance Storm at my side?" Francine purred. "All of my men are champions. That means they are the best wrestlers in ECW. I'll admit, sometimes I may get into the act a little, but that's not because The Triple Threat needs my help. It's just that I want to get my shots in every once in a while, too. And since it's because of Bigelow that I'm on these crutches, I feel perfectly justified in smashing them over his ugly bald head. If people want to try to take us on, well, I'm part of the package, too, honey."

• • •

Q: "My question is for The Giant: Do you feel left out of the World title picture these days? 'Hollywood' Hogan needed a lot of help to take the World title from you two years ago. Since then, guys like Roddy Piper, Lex Luger, and Sting have gotten the majority of the title shots, while you're left fighting the rest of the NWO." —Tom Stahl, Charleston, SC

A: "I have had a lot of help fighting the NWO from guys like Dallas Page and Lex Luger, but I do see your point, Tom, and I do feel like I'm being passed over," The Giant admitted. "I'm counting on that situation to change somewhere down the line, but if I can help out WCW's cause by pounding on Kevin Nash for a while, that's okay with me for now." □

The Giant would love to be able to strap that WCW World title belt around his waist again. But he's not going to complain about a lack of title shots just yet.

Send your questions to:
YOU ASKED US, c/o THE WRESTLER
Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

SCRAPBOOK

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chard & Arn Anderson; 2—The Road Warriors; 3—Demolition; 4—Sting & Lex Luger; 5—The Fantastics; 6—The Midnight Express; 7—Warlord & Barbarian; 8—Pat Tanaka & Paul Diamond; 9—Steve & Shaun Simpson; 10—Bruce Hart & Brian Pillman.

MARCH/APRIL 1993

STEVE AUSTIN AND Brian Pillman beat Rick Steamboat and Shane Douglas in Macon, Georgia, on March 2 to become WCW World tag team champions ... Sting defeated Big Van Vader for the WCW World heavyweight title in London on March 11; Vader, however, regained the belt six days later in Dublin ... Ted Turner put on his first WCW card in Manhattan—traditionally WWF territory—on April 14. The card featured WCW champ Vader defending his title against Sting ... Wrestling lost another superstar when Canadian strongman Dino Bravo was murdered in his Laval, Quebec, home on March 11. Bravo, 44, was rumored to have been involved in the Canadian underworld ... Hulk Hogan returned to the WWF, but fans were skeptical of the "Hulkster's" commitment to the mat sport, citing his acting career as a major distraction ... Yokozuna beat Bret Hart for the WWF World heavyweight title at WrestleMania IX on April 4, then lost it to Hogan less than three minutes later when the "Hulkster" pinned him in a 25-second impromptu challenge bout ... Eddie Gilbert and Terry Funk began one of ECW's most violent feuds to date ... Don Muraco defeated ECW heavyweight champion The Sandman on April 3 when manager Paul E. Dangerously blasted Sandman with his cellular phone, allowing Muraco to make the pin ... Tracey Smothers defeated "Dirty White Boy" Tony Anthony for the Smoky Mountain Wrestling heavyweight championship on April 2, triggering a bitter and bloody feud ... Bobby Eaton made his Japanese debut ... The Ultimate Warrior made like Hulk Hogan and bolted to Hollywood to film *Fire Power* ... Hacksaw Duggan returned to the WWF with a victory over Damien Demento. Duggan had had been out since January 6 after being splashed three times by Yokozuna ... Curt Hennig defeated Shawn Michaels for the Intercontinental belt, but the decision was overturned by WWF President Jack Tunney. Referee Bill Alfonso had been accidentally knocked out by Michaels before Hennig made the pin, which was counted by referee Earl Hebner. Tunney, however, ruled that the match was over when Alfonso was kayoed.

Dino Bravo (overpowering Greg Valentine) was murdered at his home in Quebec in March 1993. He was 44.

Terry Funk and Eddie Gilbert had a lot of fun tearing each other apart with chains in ECW in 1993. It was one of the federation's most exciting feuds of that year.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Hulk Hogan; 2—Shawn Michaels; 3—Bret Hart; 4—Yokozuna; 5—Curt Hennig; 6—Tatanka; 7—The Undertaker; 8—Doink; 9—Giant Gonzales; 10—Bam Bam Bigelow.

WCW RATINGS: 1—Big Van Vader; 2—Dustin Rhodes; 3—Sting; 4—Barry Windham; 5—Rick Rude; 6—Paul Orndorff; 7—Van Hammer; 8—Maxx Payne; 9—Cactus Jack; 10—Davey Boy Smith.

TAG TEAMS: 1—Steve Austin & Brian Pillman; 2—Money Inc.; 3—Rick & Scott Steiner; 4—The Headshrinkers; 5—Rick Steamboat & Shane Douglas; 6—The Heavenly Bodies; 7—Steve Doll & Rex King; 8—2 Cold Scorpio & Marcus Bagwell; 9—The Rock 'n' Roll Express; 10—The Harris Twins. □

BACK ISSUES OF THE Wrestler

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November 1976: Bruno-Hansen Cage Match: Incredible Sammartino Is Victorious Again! Also: Bruiser Brody, Dory Funk Jr., Bulldog Brower, Andre-Koloff, Mr. Wrestling II, Kansas City, Strongbow & White Wolf, Angelo Mosca, Mascaras & Carpentier.

November 1977: Bruno Sammartino vs. Superstar Graham: The Slaughter Must Be Stopped ... Now! Also: Snuka-Studd, Jones-Slater, Gagne & Brunzell, Ox Baker, Mil Mascaras, Stasiak & Steele, Rick Steamboat, Dino Bravo.

December 1978: The Injury Andre The Giant Must Keep Secret. Also: Victor Rivera, Brisco-Spoiler, Heenan & Bockwinkel, Tully Blanchard, Mulligan, Dino Bravo, D. Funk-Race, Rocky Johnson.

March 1979: Backlund vs. Ladd: Did Bruno's "Interference" Cost Ladd The WWWF Title? Also: Angelo Mosca, Dick Murdoch, Peter Maivia, Bob Orton Jr., Bockwinkel-Rhodes, Brisco-Race, Crusher Blackwell, Lewin-T. Funk.

September 1980: Why Ernie Ladd Says ... "I'm Tired Of Being Your King." Also: Rick Steamboat, Mad Dog Vachon, Bugsy McGraw, Patera-Patterson, Manny Fernandez, Bob Backlund, Greg Gagne, Mike Sharpe.

October 1980: Kevin Von Erich Wins The Missouri Title From Kevin Von Erich! Also: Mr. Wrestling II, Pedro Morales, Superstar Graham, Dusty Rhodes, Idol-Race, Rick McGraw.

February 1981: Larry Zbyszko's Claim: "Tony Garea Begged Me Not To Hurt Him!" Also: The Grappler, Race-Patera, Hussein Arab, Humperdink-Rhodes, Gilberts, Mr. Wrestling II, Bravo-Bockwinkel.

January 1982: Rich vs. Masked Superstar: Can Tommy Rich Survive As Georgia's Last Hero? Also: Kiwis, Bockwinkel-Atlas, Mascaras-Steamboat, Sullivan-Taylor, Bruno Sammartino.

April 1982: How Jack Brisco Controls Ric Flair's Championship Destiny. Also: Tito Santana, Valentine-Atlas, Bob Roop, Armstrongs, John Studd, Eric Embry.

June 1982: Ric Flair vs. Rick Steamboat: How The NWA Belt Strangled Wrestling's Greatest Friendship. Also: Piper-Armstrong, Hussein Arab, Bruno Sammartino, Adonis & Ventura, Butch Reed.

July 1982: Harley Race—His Destiny Is In The Hands Of Tommy Rich. Also: Rick Steamboat, Chief Jay Strongbow, Buzz Sawyer, Ric Flair, Roddy Piper.

December 1982: Morales vs. Snuka: Does Pedro Deserve To Be Intercontinental Champion? Also: Bob Orton Jr., Kamala, Rich & Rhodes, Barry Windham, Ted DiBiase, JYD-Bockwinkel, Oliver Humperdink.

February 1983: Exclusive Coverage: Nick Bockwinkel Regains The AWA Title From Otto Wanz. Also: Backlund-Graham, Rich-Sawyer, Barry Windham, Martel & Garea, McDaniel & Piper, Kamala.

July 1983: Ric Flair: "I Wrestle The Men Backlund Is Afraid Of." Also: Putski-Adonis, Kevin Sullivan, Bob Roop, Martel-Heenan.

September 1983: Nick Bockwinkel Forces Hulk Hogan Into Exile: And Only The Fans Can Bring Him Back. Also: Briscos, Blackwell-Kerry-Race, Paul Ellering, Mulligan & Windham.

June 1984: David Von Erich—We'll Never Forget You. Also: Billy Jack, Flair-Race, Bockwinkel-Bravo, Brickhouse Brown.

August 1984: Garvin vs. Roberts: "Hands Of Stone" Crushes "The Snake." Also: Freebirds-Devastation Inc., Sawyer-Sullivan, Lawler & Dillon, McDaniel-Race.

September 1984: Kerry Von Erich Wins The NWA Title: For David ... For Texas ... For Wrestling! Also: Billy Jack, Bundy & Superstar-Road Warriors, Piper & Orndorff-Johnson & Atlas, Rick Martel.

November 1984: The $50,000 Full-Nelson Challenge Match: Billy Jack Gets Revenge Against Superstar Graham. Also: Piper-Hogan, Heenan & Saito, Brody & Hansen, Von Erichs.

December 1984: The Tully Blanchard-Rick Steamboat Feud: Will Dusty Rhodes End It ... Or Make It Worse? Also: Tito Santana, Martel-Atlas, D. Funk, Mike Von Erich, Williams-Taylor.

January 1985: Kerry Von Erich: "I've Got Ric Flair's NWA Title Within My Grasp." Also: Albano & Lauper, Koloffs & Kernodle, Road Warriors, Lawler & Rude, Scott McGhee.

April 1985: Six-Man Riot! Road Warriors & Ellering vs. Rhodes, Rich, & Anderson. Also: Tonga Kid, tomorrow's stars, Adams-Kevin, Flair-Jack, Terminators.

July 1985: It's A Dog's Life ... And Junkyard Dog Wouldn't Trade It With Anyone! Also: Backlund-Martel, Kernodle-Koloff, Butch Reed, Hernandez & Sunshine, Mike Graham.

October 1985: David Shultz Gets An NWA Title Shot: Ric Flair—"I Wrestle The Men Hulk Hogan Is Afraid Of!" Also: Misty Blue, Rick Martel, Kendall Windham, George Steele, Killer Brooks, wrestling greats' all-time top 10.

March 1987: Ivan & Khrushchev's Kremlin Orders: Crush Nikita Koloff's Russian Revolution! Also: Barry Windham, One Man Gang, Brian Adias, Savage-Steamboat, Jimmy Snuka.

April 1987: Hulk's Giant Tasks: Hercules, Kamala ... And Andre? Also: Luger-Allen, Rich-Lawler, Rude & Fernandez-Rock 'n' Rolls, Kevin Von Erich, Skandor Akbar.

July 1987: Missy Hyatt: Will She Kiss And Tell In The WWF? Also: Chris Adams, Hart Foundation, Luger & Horsemen, Nikita-Cornette, Stan Hansen.

September 1987: Independence Day! Also: Hennig-Bockwinkel, Hart Foundation, Koloffs, Bubba Rogers, Missy Hyatt.

December 1987: Hulk Hogan: Will He Be Drowned By The New Wave Of Challengers? Also: Hennig-Lawler, Windham-Steiner, Flair-Williams, Brutus Beefcake, Ronnie Garvin.

February 1988: Ric Flair Admits: "I'm Nothing Without The NWA Belt!" Also: Kerry Von Erich, Jim Cornette, Hogan-Andre, Hennig-Lawler, Terry Taylor.

March 1988: After Four Years As Champion ... Only Hulk Hogan Can Beat Hulk Hogan. Also: Warriors-Demolition, Steve Williams, Luger & Dillon, Calgary, Terry Gordy.

April 1988 (Special Issue): Starrcade, Survivor Series, World Class: Wrestling's Greatest Day! Also: Midnight Rockers, Luger-Horsemen, Santana & Martel, McDaniel-Hennig, Bobby Eaton.

October 1988: The Fantastics Declare: "We Will Not Share Our Fans With The Rock 'n' Roll Express!" Also: Rhodes-Windham, Curt Hennig, Roberts-Rude, Rougeaus, Jim Garvin.

January 1989: The Horsemen Destroyed! The World Title Gained! But The Midnight Express Must Still Prove Themselves! Also: Top Guns, Hart & Rougeaus, Andre-Savage-Hulk, Terry Gordy, Kevin Von Erich.

February 1989: The Road Warriors: "Sting, Dusty, & The Fans Can Go To Hell!" Also: Madusa Miceli, Blue Blazer, Warrior-Hogan, Bigelow-Gordy, Eddie Gilbert.

March 1989: Scared Stiff! "Don't Say Snake!" Also: Jeff Jarrett, Cactus Jack, Ric Flair, Bam Bam Bigelow, Hercules, Iron Sheik.

April 1989: Hulkamania Runs Wild Again! Can Randy Savage Stop The Onslaught? Also: British Bulldogs, Road Warriors-Sting & Luger, Lawler-Kerry, Andre, Mike Rotundo.

May 1989: Rick Steamboat—Champion; Rick Steamboat—Challenger: Which Is Better? Also: Sid Vicious, Dusty Rhodes, Savage-Hogan, Samoan Swat Team, Wendi Richter.

July 1989: Dino Bravo: The Man Hulk Hogan Cannot Beat! Also: Flair-Steamboat, Rhodes & Perez, Road Warriors & Ellering, Michael Hayes.

August 1989 (Special Issue): Supercard Sunday! Exclusive Coverage Of WrestleMania V And Clash Of Champions VI. Also: Kerry-Embry, Randy Savage, Great Muta, Ted DiBiase, Teddy Long.

September 1989: Our Urgent Plea To Ric Flair: Don't Wrestle Terry Funk. Also: Demolition, Roddy Piper, Hogan-Zeus, Larry Zbyszko, Jerry Lawler.

October 1989: No Holds Barred! Hogan & Beefcake vs. Savage & Zeus: An Exclusive Preview & Analysis. Also: Eric Embry, Four Horsemen, Teddy Long, Hayes-Luger, Art Barr, Billy Jack Haynes.

November 1989: Roddy Piper Pins Randy Savage ... And Hulk Hogan Is Scared Stiff! Also: Mr. T & Von Erichs, Garvin & Hayes, Flair-T. Funk, Dustin-Steel Man, Sgt. Slaughter.

December 1989: Gary Hart: "Muta Took The Sting Out Of Sting!" Also: Skyscrapers, Andre-Warrior, Barry Windham, Rock 'n' Rolls, Scott Norton, Ken Patera.

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February 1990: Can Sting Keep Luger From The NWA Belt? Also: Terry Gordy, Rick Martel, Hogan-Brown, Doom, Nikita Koloff, Bruce Hart.

March 1990: Funk-Flair: "I Quit!—One War Ends, Two More Begin. Also: Nikita Koloff, Survivor Series, Steiners, Hogan-Zeus, Jim Cornette.

April 1990: Hulk Hogan: A Decade Of Greatness. Also: Luger-Flair, Woman, Piper-Heenan, Billy Travis, Badd Company.

May 1990: Sting & Ultimate Warrior: Running A Parallel Course To Greatness. Also: Von Erichs, Big Bossman, Pillman & Zenk, Hulk Hogan, Mark Callous.

June 1990: Hulkamania—The Fall And Rise! Also: Rockers, Koloffs, Horsemen, Flair-Luger, Steiners.

July 1990: My 10 Challenges To Ric Flair, By Lex Luger. Also: Lanny Poffo, Dusty-Savage, Luger-Flair, Doom, Tully Blanchard.

August 1990: Hogan-Warrior II: You Can Make It Happen. Also: Eric Embry, Demolition, Doom, Larry Zbyszko.

September 1990: The Ultimate Warrior Wimps Out! Why He Won't Wrestle Hulk Hogan. Also: Billy Jack Haynes, Lex Luger, Doom-Steiners, Tugboat, Kerry-Borne.

October 1990: Hulk Hogan vs. Earthquake: Exclusive SummerSlam Preview & Analysis. Also: Ultimate Warrior, Ric Flair, Tommy Rich, Tasmanian Devil, Chris Von Erich.

November 1990: The Luger-Sting Rivalry: Ready To Explode Again! Also: Lawler & Dundee, Brutus Beefcake, Kerry Von Erich, Harley Race, Steiners.

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February 1991: The Incredible "Halloween Havoc Hoax"! Unraveling The Diabolical Plot. Also: Muta-Steamboat, Hogan-Hart, Ultimate Warrior, Cornette & Express, Norman.

March 1991: Warning To The Ultimate Warrior: Roddy Piper Wants You! Also: Gilbert-Jarrett, Cornette & Express, Teddy Long, Survivor Series, Scott Norton.

April 1991: Hulk Hogan: The Challenges That Remain. Also: Ted DiBiase, Skyscrapers, Lex Luger, Tom Zenk, Fabulous Ones.

May 1991: Only Hulk Hogan Can Rid The WWF Of The Stench Of Sgt. Slaughter. Also: Ric Flair, Bobby Eaton, Sheik-Brazil, Power & Glory, Terry Funk.

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July 1991: Can Ric Flair Shatter The "Myth" Of Japanese Superiority? Also: Embry & Prichard, LOD-Nastys, Steiners, Savage & Elizabeth.

August 1991: If Sgt. Slaughter Said "I'm Sorry" ... Would Hulk And The World Forgive Him? Also: Luger-Nikita, Hennig-Davey Boy, Lanny Poffo, Bam Bam Bigelow.

September 1991: Sting & Luger vs. The Steiners: How Their Friendship Survived The Most Brutal Match Of The Year. Also: LOD, Cactus-Gilbert, Undertaker, Bobby Eaton, Sid Vicious.

October 1991 (Special Issue): 25 Years—The Silver Anniversary Celebration Of Wrestling's Most Respected Magazine. Includes: Year-By-Year, greatest photos, 25 greatest wrestlers, Q & A Bruno Sammartino.

November 1991: Lex Luger Wins

The Title—But Loses His Fans. Also: Rick Steamboat, Roddy Piper, Global, Diamond Studd, Lawler-Embry.

December 1991: Roddy Piper's Exclusive Analysis: Flair vs. Hogan—Who Will Win The Match Of The Century? Also: Sting, 25 greatest teams, Beverly, Cactus Jack.

January 1992: The LOD's Championship Catastrophe: Overpowered By The Natural Disasters. Also: Johnny B. Badd, Mr. Hughes, Jake Roberts, Ronnie Gossett.

February 1992: Shocking WWF Report: McMahon Offers Bounty On Flair—Will Vince Pay The Piper? Also: Ron Simmons, Tito Santana, Bob Backlund, R. Steiner-Abdullah.

March 1992: After Survivor Series & Tuesday In Texas: Has The WWF Title Suffered Irreparable Damage? Also: Brian Pillman, Anderson & Bruiser, Rude-Sting, Mountie-Hart, Jeff Jarrett.

May 1992: He Rumbled Past 29 Men ... Ric Flair's Hour Of Power: Can One Man Stop Him At WrestleMania VIII? Also: Anderson & Eaton, Roddy Piper, Dusty Rhodes, USWA, Don Owen.

June 1992: In Ric Flair's High-Stakes Championship Game, Hulk Hogan & Sid Justice Are Mere Pawns. Also: Eddie Gilbert, Ultimate Warrior, Vinnie Vegas, WCW titles, Koko B. Ware.

July 1992: "Number Two Just Won't Do": For Rick Rude, The U.S. Belt Means Failure: Also: Madusa, Gorilla Monsoon, LOD, Nurse Vanessa, Greg Valentine, Sabu.

August 1992: The Ultimate Warrior: WrestleMania's Accidental Hero. Also: Bunkhouse matches, Undertaker-Roberts, Sting, JYD, Rob Van Dam.

September 1992: Hey, Legion Of Doom—Go For The Title Or Go Away! Also: Repo-Crush, Mondo Kleen, Freebirds-Valentine & Taylor, Dangerous Alliance, Moondogs.

October 1992: British Bulldog & Ultimate Warrior: Why They'll Be Crowned At SummerSlam. Also: Scotty Flamingo, Brian Lee, Martel-Tatanka, Steve Austin, Sting.

November 1992: WWF Beware! It's The Perfect Time For A Curt Hennig Comeback! Also: Crush, Butch Reed, Sting, Buddy Rogers, Dan Spivey.

January 1993: Sting Turns Sadistic: "Hurting Jake Makes Me Happy!" Also: Anderson & Eaton, Bushwhackers-Moondogs, Ramon-Savage, Natural Disasters, Masa Chono.

February 1993: WWF Champion Bret Hart: His Five Most Dangerous Challenges. Also: Sgt. Slaughter, Steve Austin, Rick Steiner, Bob Backlund, Terry Taylor.

April 1993 What's In? What's Out? Also: Razor Ramon, Rick Steamboat, Patriot, Tatanka, Brian Christopher.

November 1993: Bret Hart vs. Lex Luger: It's Not Over Yet! Also: Rude-Dustin, Hulk Hogan, Marty Jannetty, Heavenly Bodies, Tatanka, Sherri Martel.

January 1994: Roasted, Broiled, Fried, Baked ... Any Way You Cook It, Hogan's A Chicken! Also: Rude-Flair, Bagwell & Scorpio, Jim Cornette, Jerry Lawler, Hansen & T. Funk-Abdullah & Sullivan.

April 1994: WCW Fans Demand: "We Want Hogan!" Why Their Plea May Soon Be Answered. Also: Crush-Savage, Ric Flair, Adam Bomb, The Boss, electric barbed wire.

May 1994: Aftershocks! How The Royal Rumble Shook Up WrestleMania. Also: Hulk Hogan, Boss, Douglas-Sherri, Patriot, improve WCW.

June 1994 (Special Issue): What's Your Wrestling IQ? Also: Brian Pillman, greatest matches, Missy-WCW, Steiners & Harts, Ron Simmons, Mr. Hughes, Doink.

July 1994: Ric Flair vs. Hulk Hogan: We Preview The Inevitable Battle. Also: Dreamer-Snuka, Jim Crockett's WWN, Ted DiBiase, Shane Douglas, Terra Ryzing.

August 1994: Bret's Nightmare Team Becomes A Reality: Owen Hart & Yokozuna. Also: Cactus-Vader, MOM, Flair-Badd, Nasty Boys, Luna Vachon.

September 1994 (Special Issue): WWF Midyear Report! Also: Big Van Vader, Parker-Hollywood Blonds, Sting-Rude, WWF legal problems, Prince Kharis, Bunkhouse-Rhodes, Public Enemy.

October 1994: The Undertaker: Two Bodies, One Soul. Also: Cactus Jack, Scorpio-Sabu, Terry Funk, Sheik, Bunkhouse Buck, Diesel-Michaels.

November 1994: Hulk Hogan's New Commandments: Say Prayers, Take Vitamins ... And Kick Butt! Also: Owen-Bret, Lord Steven Regal, Johnny B. Badd, Jerry Lawler, Mikey Whipwreck.

December 1994: Hulkster Under Siege! Can Hogan Hold Off WCW's Best? Also: Lex Luger, Sid Vicious, Steve Austin, Adam Bomb, Dusty Rhodes.

January 1995: Our Holiday Wish List For 1995. Also: Johnny B. Badd, DiBiase-Tatanka, Bob Backlund, PG-13, Hacksaw Duggan.

February 1995: Hulk's A Maniac! Why Vader Should Be Deathly Afraid Of Hogan. Also: Dangerously & Sabu, Skaaland & Luger, Steiners, Patriot-Bagwell, Undertaker-Vicious, Honky Tonk.

March 1995 (Special Issue): 1994—The Year In Pictures. Also: Sullivan-Hogan-Sullivan, WWF '95-WWF '85, Ric Flair, MOM, 911.

June 1995 (Special Issue): He's Barking ... And Ready To Bite: The British Bulldog Demands A Title Shot—Now! Also: Book Of Lists, Bubba Rogers, The Kid, Alex Wright, Rotten-Rotten, Avalanche.

July 1995: Hulk Hogan's Contract With America: Also: Marty Jannetty, Brian Pillman, Lawrence Taylor, Bill Dundee.

August 1995: Don't Let Their Cease-Fire Fool You: Shawn Still Hungers For Diesel's Title. Also: Lawrence Taylor, Tod Gordon, Hulk Hogan, powerful people, Gargoyle.

October 1995: President Backlund?! Also: Steiners, Austin & Pillman, Miss Texas, Gordon Solie.

November 1995: "Take That—And Shut Up!" If Savage Can't Silence Flair, He's Through! Also: Mabel, Jarrett-Ramon, Renegade, WWF legends roundtable.

December 1995 (Special Issue): 20Shawn Michaels: Too Good To Be Second Best! Also: Wrestling rulebook, Vega-Ramon, Mama Cornette, Kamala-Duggan, Big Van Vader.

March 1996 (Special Issue): 1995—The Year In Pictures. Also: Hogan-Hart, Big Van Vader, Sabu, Brian Pillman.

April 1996: Luger, Sting, Hogan, Savage: Can't We All Be Friends? Also: DiBiase & Kid, Diesel-McMahon, Dallas Page, Jeff Jarrett.

May 1996: WWF In-Vader! Can Bret, Shawn, & Razor Play The Pain Game? Also: Public Enemy, Steve Austin, wrestling oddities, Kensuke Sasaki, Ric Flair.

June 1996 (Special Issue): Fear Of Height! How The Giant Is Paralyzing Wrestling. Also: Shock 'n' Wrestling, Razor Ramon, Brian Pillman, Konnan.

July 1996: Babes In Boyland! Also: Sunny, Elizabeth, Kimberly, Inoki-Vader, WCW tag teams, Woman.

August 1996: Shawn Michaels: Finally—He Has The Title ... Now Here's What He's Gotta Do With It! Also: Public Enemy-Nastys, Bret Hart, Booty Man-Sullivan, Mabel.

September 1996 (Special Issue): WWF Midyear Report. Also: Savio Vega, Sabu-Scorpio, Chris Benoit, Goldust, Olympians, Giant.

October 1996: Muscling Back To The Top: The Warrior Is Ready To Rule Again. Also: Warriors & Sasaki-Steiners & Norton, Razor & Diesel, Mabel & Mo, Blue Meanie.

November 1996: Brian Pillman: Next WWF Champ! Also: Giant-Sting, Ray Stevens, Dick Murdoch, Cloudy, John Tenta, WCW shuffle.

December 1996 (Special Issue): WWF vs. WCW: Top 10 Faceoff! Also: Ahmed Johnson, Ric Flair, Mero & Sable, Goldust, Sandman.

Holiday 1996: WCW Shocker: Randy Savage Is Set To Join Hulk Hogan's NWO! Also: Steve Austin, Michaels-Goldust, Arn Anderson, Van Dam-Sabu, Steve Williams.

January 1997: It Could Happen! Hogan's Next Move ... Buy WCW! Also: Undertaker, New Jack, Owen-Bulldog, Ted DiBiase.

February 1997: Wrestling's Top Stars: What 1997 Has In Store For Them! Also: Michaels-Hart, Pit Bull I, Rey Misterio Jr., Kevin Nash.

March 1997 (Special Issue): 1996—The Year In Pictures. Also: Hulk Hogan, Austin-Pillman, Dallas Page, Hunter Hearst Helmsley.

April 1997: Sting: Who Screwed Up This Man's Mind? Also: Hart-Michaels, NWO, Sandman, Barry Windham.

May 1997: Hogan's Headache: The Pain Is Piper! And The Remedy Is Revenge! Also: Michaels-Hart, Guerreros, J.C. Ice, gang violence, Marc Mero.

June 1997 (Special Edition): Let Us Spray! When The Giant Goes Down ... Heaven Help WCW! Also: Toughest opponents, Sid-Bret-Shawn, Owen Hart, Raven.

July 1997: Infighting, Politics, Egos: Is The NWO Losing Its Edge? Also: WWF-ECW, Dean Malenko, Super 8 tourney, Jerry Lawler.

August 1997: Dream Match! Sting's Bat & The Side Of Hogan's Head! Also: Ahmed Johnson, Kimberly & DDP, WrestleMania sideshow, Jeff Jarrett, Jimmy Snuka.

September 1997 (Special Issue): WWF Midyear Report: Plus: NWO, Shawn-Bret, football players, Terry & Dory Funk, Luna Vacon.

THE WRESTLER

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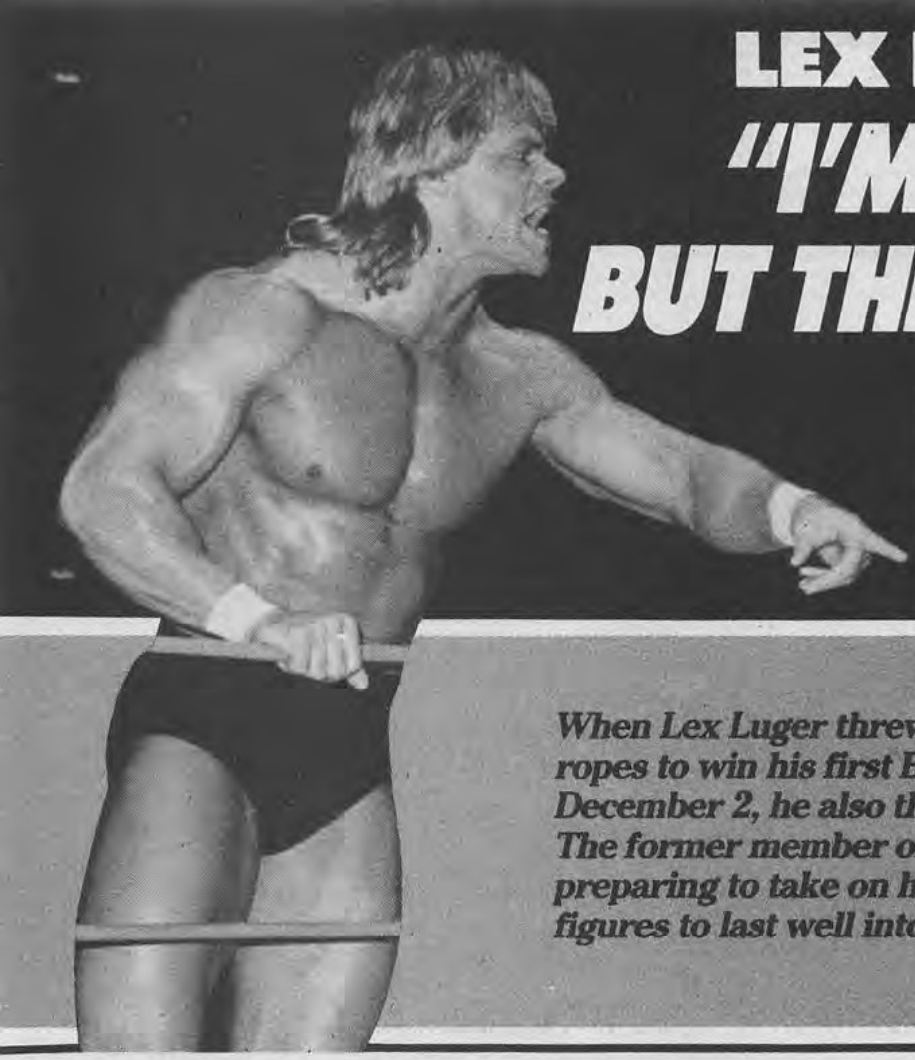


LEX LUGER: "I'M FREE OF THE BUT THE HORSEMEN

WRESTLER *CLASSIC!*

We've often wondered in recent months whether J.J. Dillon still holds a grudge against Lex Luger. This "*Wrestler* Classic" from 10 years ago gives you some insight into just how bad their relationship was at one point and how happy Luger was to leave the Horsemen

When Lex Luger threw manager J.J. Dillon over the ropes to win his first Bunkhouse Stampede on December 2, he also threw his career into disarray. The former member of The Four Horsemen is now preparing to take on his ex-teammates in a war that figures to last well into 1988—and beyond!

FOR PERHAPS THE first time in his career Lex Luger is alone. All alone. His days with the notorious Four Horsemen came to a crashing halt on December 2 in Miami Beach, Florida, when he refused to eliminate himself in the first Bunkhouse Stampede of the winter and allow his manager J.J. Dillon to win the match.

"I know there are a lot of people out there wondering whether I can make it," said Luger. "Down in Florida, I always had Hiro [Matsuda] or Bob Roop, and then Barry Windham. When I came up here, I was immediately part of the Horsemen. But now it's just me, Lex against the world. I know I haven't made too many friends over the past year, but let me tell you something: I don't *need* friends."

Luger's words reveal his youthful arrogance. In only two years as a professional wrestler, he's been named 1986 Rookie of the Year, has captured the Southern title three times, and won the U.S. championship. So Luger, a 268-pound native of Chicago (where, ironically, he lost the U.S. belt to Dusty Rhodes at Starrcade '87) has every reason to believe in his abilities. But after two years in the game he should realize that few athletes make it on their own.

Now Luger is getting ready to fight his most dangerous battle—without any help.

"I'm free of the Horsemen," said Luger, sounding every bit like a man who has finally won release after a long imprisonment. "I no longer have to worry about J.J. Dillon telling me what to do, or about playing second fiddle to Ric Flair, even when he *didn't* have the World title. Now I only have to worry about myself, my own abilities, and my own career. But I still have a job to do. A big job. The Horsemen aren't free of me!"

As Luger talks about his 11 months with Dillon, Flair, Arn Anderson, and Tully Blanchard, it's obvious there's a lot he resents.

"My biggest mistake was putting my career in Dillon's hands, because he's nothing but a user," Luger said. "My second biggest mistake was thinking Flair was out for my own good. And my third biggest mistake was thinking that a team like the Horsemen has a place in wrestling. I've learned that wrestling is *not* a team sport."

Luger was referring to the problems inherent in being part of a clique such as the Horsemen. As Southern champion in Florida, Luger took Flair to the limit on several occasions. When Luger announced he was coming to the World Championship area, it was assumed he would go after Flair. Then he joined the Horsemen and became part of Flair's team. Ordi-

HORSEMEN . . . AREN'T FREE OF ME!"

Lex Luger (opposite page) seems to be telling Ric Flair, Tully Blanchard, J.J. Dillon, and Arn Anderson (above) to keep out of his business. If they don't, they're likely to fall victim to the awesome power of "The Total Package"—as Blanchard already has (below).

narily, the U.S. champion would get many shots at the World title; Luger got none.

"That's the thing that bugs me the most," said Luger. "The Horsemen were always talking about how they band together and help each other, but soon I realized everybody was only out for themselves. Dillon wanted the glory he couldn't attain as a wrestler and Flair wanted his belt. I'll tell you this: Flair would stab his best friend in the back for that belt. He could've given me a match. I don't see any reason why two friends can't wrestle each other. This *is* a sport, isn't it? Football teams don't have to hate each other to play a game. Why would it have been so bad if Flair wrestled me a few times? I *deserved* a shot."

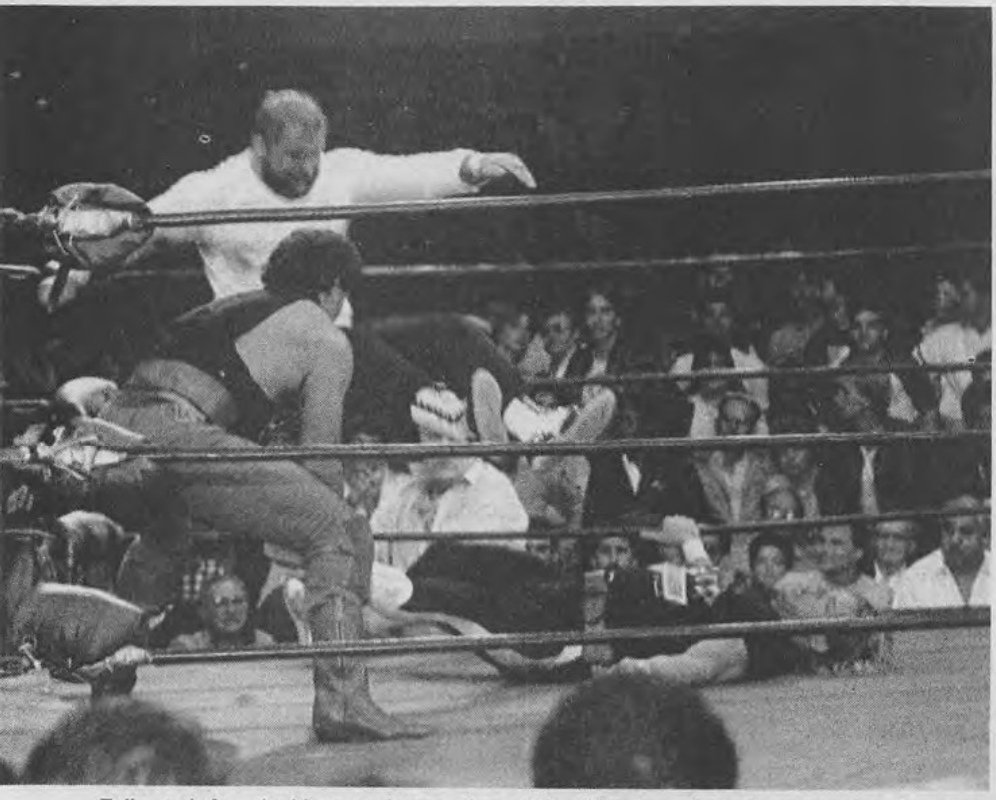
Flair insists he would've given Luger a title shot; all he had to do was ask. Luger thinks a title shot should have been offered. Dillon says Luger should have been a team player instead of an individual, and that he had no right to want a shot at Flair. Anderson and Blanchard, currently the NWA World tag team champions, think Luger is finally showing the selfishness they suspected of him all along.

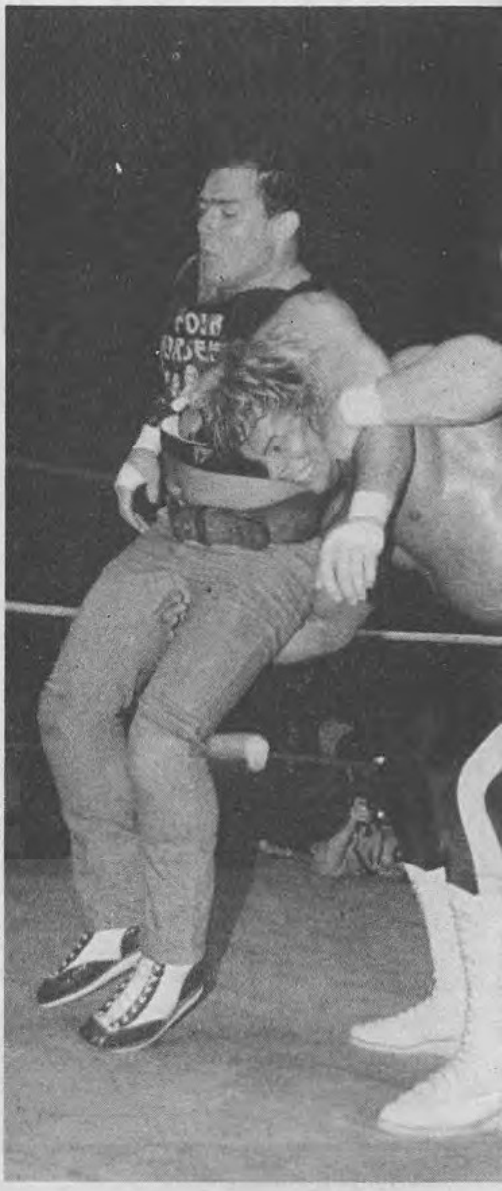
"What he did in Miami Beach didn't surprise me in the least," said Anderson. "I just said to him,

(Continued on page 50)

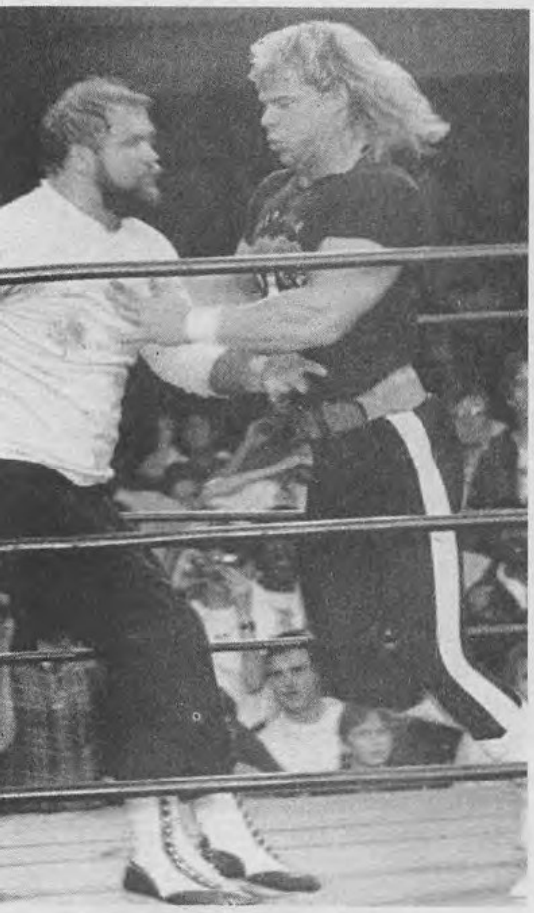
LEX LUGER

(Continued from page 31)





Tully and Arn double-team Luger after seeing him toss their manager over the ropes (above). Luger sets Arn up for an Irish whip (below). Luger has concentrated his attacks on the Horsemen—particularly Blanchard (right)—during many of the Bunkhouse Stampede cards, and is determined to eliminate all his former partners.



'Go ahead, do whatever you want,' because I knew he didn't care about the team. I was against him joining the Horsemen from the start, but then everything happened with Ole, and J.J. told us Luger was one of the best young prospects in wrestling. He's right about that, but Luger had better get his head on straight or he's gonna find himself out of this game real fast."

Arn could be right. If Luger tries to take on the Horsemen by himself, he'll quickly find that a four-on-one disadvantage could be hazardous to his future. Luger might be wise to recruit the help of Barry Windham, his former tag team partner in Florida. Dusty Rhodes is also a possibility; Rhodes expressed admiration for Luger after winning the U.S. title and is always willing to help another wrestler take on the Horsemen.

Luger, however, thinks he can handle the Horsemen by himself. "This is my battle," he said. "I'm fully aware of my abilities and I'm not going in over my head. I am 'The Total Package,' and that means looks, power, wrestling ability, *and* brains. I'm no idiot. I know I can stand alone and take on Flair, Anderson, Blanchard—even Dillon if he's stupid enough to get involved."

Luger's war with the Horsemen figures to be one of the most intriguing feuds of 1988. Whether he will survive is another story. Luger says he isn't through with the Horsemen. But when the Horsemen are through with him, will Luger be finished? □

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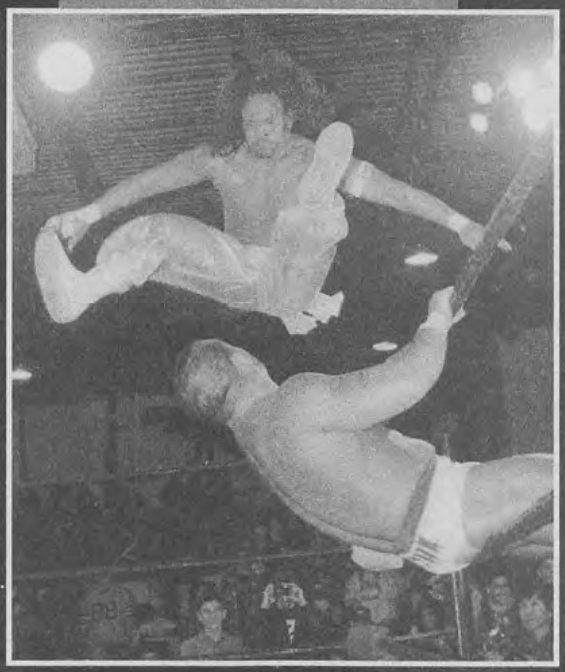

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The Wrestler

TOP 10

1. **SHAWN MICHAELS**
   234, San Antonio, TX
   (1) WWF World champion
2. **STING**
   260, Venice Beach, CA
   (-) WCW World champion
3. **DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE**
   260, Tampa, FL
   (-) U.S. heavyweight champion
4. **THE UNDERTAKER**
   328, parts unknown
   (3) No. 2 contender: WWF World title
5. **ULTIMO DRAGON**
   175, Mexico City, Mexico
   (-) WCW cruiserweight champion
6. **OWEN HART**
   227, Calgary, Alberta
   (-) No. 3 contender: WWF World title
7. **CURT HENNIG**
   235, Minneapolis, MN
   (4) No. 6 contender: WCW World title
8. **STEVE AUSTIN**
   241, Dallas, TX
   (-) No. 4 contender: WWF World title
9. **EDDY GUERRERO**
   221, El Paso, TX
   (2) No. 8 contender: WCW World title
10. **TAZ**
    248, Red Hook, NY
    (-) ECW TV champion

Ultimo Dragon

TAG TEAMS

1. **BILLY GUNN & JESSE JAMES**
   Combined weight: 496 pounds
   (2) WWF World tag team champions
2. **RICK & SCOTT STEINER**
   Combined weight: 483 pounds
   (1) WCW World tag team champions
3. **CHRIS CANDIDO & LANCE STORM**
   Combined weight: 457 pounds
   (-) ECW tag team champions
4. **MASA CHONO & KEIJI MUTO**
   Combined weight: 480 pounds
   (5) IWGP tag team champions
5. **THE BLACKJACKS**
   Combined weight: 582 pounds
   (-) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title
6. **HARLEM HEAT**
   Combined weight: 550 pounds
   (7) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title
7. **HENRY & PHINEAS GODWINN**
   Combined weight: 531 pounds
   (-) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title
8. **LITTLE GUIDO & TRACEY SMOTHERS**
   Combined weight: 448 pounds
   (4) No. 1 contenders: ECW tag title
9. **THE HEADBANGERS**
   Combined weight: 488 pounds
   (10) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title
10. **THE BARBARIAN & MENG**
    Combined weight: 589 pounds
    (-) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title

WCW

World Champion:
STING
(-) 260, Venice Beach, CA

1. **DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE** *(5) 260, Tampa, FL*
2. **HULK HOGAN** *(C) 275, Venice Beach, CA*
3. **ULTIMO DRAGON** *(-) 175, Mexico City, Mexico*
4. **LEX LUGER** *(9) 265, Chicago, IL*
5. **BOOKER T** *(-) 250, Harlem, NY*
6. **CURT HENNIG** *(1) 235, Minneapolis, MN*
7. **BILL GOLDBERG** *(-) 270, Tulsa, OK*
8. **EDDY GUERRERO** *(2) 221, El Paso, TX*
9. **PERRY SATURN** *(3) 234, Cleveland, OH*
10. **DEAN MALENKO** *(-) 216, Tampa, FL*

WWF

World Champion:
SHAWN MICHAELS
(C) 234, San Antonio, TX

1. **ROCKY MAIVIA** *(7) 272, Pearl City, HI*
2. **THE UNDERTAKER** *(2) 328, parts unknown*
3. **OWEN HART** *(-) 227, Calgary, Alberta*
4. **STEVE AUSTIN** *(1) 241, Dallas, TX*
5. **KEN SHAMROCK** *(3) 235, San Bernardino, CA*
6. **TAKA MICHINOKU** *(-) 169, Morioka, Japan*
7. **KANE** *(5) 345, parts unknown*
8. **DUDE LOVE** *(4) 277, Truth or Consequences, NM*
9. **VADER** *(-) 450, Denver, CO*
10. **GOLDUST** *(-) 254, Austin, TX*

MCW

MCW Champion:
TERRY GOLDEN
(1) 241, Venice Beach, CA

1. **COLORADO KID** *(C) 231, Denver, CO*
2. **FLASH FLANAGAN** *(7) 221, Indianapolis, IN*
3. **WOLFIE D** *(4) 231, Nashville, TN*
4. **DOUG GILBERT** *(2) 241, Lexington, TN*
5. **STEVEN DUNN** *(8) 240, Dallas, TX*
6. **BILLY TRAVIS** *(3) 239, Dallas, TX*
7. **FRENCHY RIVIERA** *(5) 450, Paris, France*
8. **REX KING** *(9) 237, Atlanta, GA*
9. **THRILLBILLY** *(10) 281, Sikeston, MO*
10. **DUTCH MANTEL** *(-) 224, Oil Trough, TX*

ECW

ECW Champion:
SHANE DOUGLAS
(C) 240, Pittsburgh, PA

1. **TAZ** *(1) 248, Red Hook, NY*
2. **SABU** *(3) 225, Bombay*
3. **THE SANDMAN** *(6) 244, Philadelphia, PA*
4. **ROB VAN DAM** *(8) 240, Battle Creek, MI*
5. **JUSTIN CREDIBLE** *(10) 225, Waterbury, CT*
6. **TOMMY DREAMER** *(5) 245, Yonkers, NY*
7. **GREAT SASUKE** *(-) 212, Morioka, Japan*
8. **PAUL DIAMOND** *(-) 243, Minneapolis, MN*
9. **JERRY LYNN** *(-) 214, Minneapolis, MN*
10. **CHRIS CHETTI** *(-) 227, Amityville, NY*

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue. while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of these issues in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only, and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a first-place rating, nine for second place, and so on. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, with a possible maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

SINGLES

1—THE UNDERTAKER.....84 points
2—LEX LUGER.....67 points
3—BRET HART.....47 points
4—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE.....35 points
5—STEVE AUSTIN.....32 points

TAG TEAMS

1—RICK & SCOTT STEINER.....75 points
2—THE ROAD WARRIORS.....70 points
3—SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH.....41 points
4—THE GIANT & LEX LUGER.....40 points
5—OWEN HART & DAVEY BOY SMITH.....38 points

For period ended January 2, 1998

ALL-PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Michael Modest; 1—Tony Jones; 2—Maxx Justice; 3—Robert Thompson; 4—Erin O'Grady; 5—Vic Grimes; 6—Donovan Morgan; 7—Frank Murdoch; 8—Boom Boom Comini; 9—Chris Cole; 10—Steve Rizzono.

CENTURY WRESTLING ALLIANCE: CWA Champion—Title Vacant; 1—Tony Rumble; 2—Vic Steamboat; 3—Knuckles Nelson; 4—Abdullah The Butcher; 5—Tony Atlas; 6—Ace Darling; 7—Joel Davis; 8—El Mascarado; 9—Devon Storm; 10—Pink Assassin.

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—Glen Osbourne; 1—Reckless Youth; 2—Cheetah Master; 3—Ace Darling; 4—Lance Diamond; 5—Devon Storm; 6—Mr. Ooh La La; 7—Blue Thunder; 8—Boogie Woogie Brown; 9—Viper; 10—Commando.

NEW DIMENSION WRESTLING: Champion—Madd Maxx; 1—Ricky Morton; 2—Bobby Fulton; 3—Rick Link; 4—Manny Fernandez; 5—Pez Whatley; 6—Rikki Nelson; 7—Mr. Excellent; 8—Venom; 9—Mike Maverick; 10—Lumbee Warrior.

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Tiger Khan; 1—Reckless Youth; 2—Lance Diamond; 3—Bart Gunn; 4—Cheetah Master; 5—Glen Osbourne; 6—Ace Darling; 7—Flash Flanagan; 8—Spellbinder; 9—Steven Dunn; 10—Devon Storm.

PRO WRESTLING AMERICA: Champion—Bodyguard For Hire; 1—Christopher Michaels; 2—Hellraiser; 3—Typhoon; 4—Lance Diamond; 5—Ace Darling; 6—Cheetah Master; 7—Devon Storm; 8—Reckless Youth; 9—Mad Russian; 10—Beerhouse Mike.

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Ripper; 1—Cruel Connection II; 2—Italian Stallion; 3—George South; 4—Madd Maxxine; 5—Flaming Youth; 6—Krush; 7—Terry Austin; 8—Chris Hamrick; 9—Wasted Youth; 10—Gladiator II.

NEW JAPAN

IWGP Champion:
KENSUKE SASAKI
(C) 233, Tokyo, Japan

1—KEIJI MUTO
(3) 245, Yamanashi, Japan
2—MASA CHONO
(2) 235, Tokyo, Japan
3—HIROYOSHI TENZAN
(4) 270, Tokyo, Japan
4—SHINYA HASHIMOTO
(1) 287, Gifu, Japan
5—NAOYA OGAWA
(6) 286, Tokyo, Japan
6—KAZUO YAMAZAKI
(–) 182, Tokyo, Japan
7—TATSUMI FUJINAMI
(–) 234, Oita, Japan
8—RIKI CHOSHU
(5) 246, Tokuyama, Japan
9—JUSHIN LIGER
(8) 206, Hiroshima, Japan
10—SHINJIRO OTANI
(7) 215, Yokohama, Japan

ALL-JAPAN

Triple Crown Champion:
MITSUHARU MISAWA
(C) 228, Ashikaga, Japan

1—TOSHIAKI KAWADA
(2) 245, Ashikaga, Japan
2—AKIRA TAUE
(4) 265, Chichibu, Japan
3—KENTA KOBASHI
(1) 261, Fukuchiyama, Japan
4—JUN AKIYAMA
(5) 230, Hiroshima, Japan
5—STEVE WILLIAMS
(3) 265, Norman, OK
6—GARY ALBRIGHT
(6) 343, Billings, MT
7—STAN HANSEN
(–) 322, Borger, TX
8—TAKAO OMORI
(8) 221, Tokyo, Japan
9—TAMON HONDA
(–) 191, Tokyo, Japan
10—MAUNAKEA MOSSMAN
(9) 245, Honolulu, HI

EMLL

EMLL Champion:
TITLE VACANT

1—RAYO DE JALISCO JR.
(3) 270, Guadalajara, Mexico
2—EL HIJO DEL SANTO
(1) 180, Tulancingo, Mexico
3—CIEN CARAS
(4) 235, Lagos de Moreno, Mexico
4—ULTIMO DRAGON
(5) 175, Mexico City, Mexico
5—UNIVERSO 2000
(6) 215, parts unknown
6—NEGRO CASAS
(2) 175, Mexico City, Mexico
7—BLACK WARRIOR
(7) 221, Mexico City, Mexico
8—ATLANTIS
(9) 180, Guadalajara, Mexico
9—EMILIO CHARLES JR.
(10) 222, Mexico City, Mexico
10—FELINO
(–) 165, Mexico City, Mexico

PROMO AZTECA

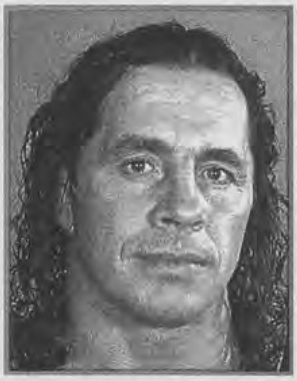
PROMO AZTECA Champion:
KONNAN
(C) 237, Mexico City, Mexico

1—MASCARA SAGRADA
(3) 220, Mexico City, Mexico
2—SILVER KING
(7) 215, Mexico City, Mexico
3—LA PARKA
(5) 235, Torreon, Mexico
4—PIERROTH JR.
(1) 240, Mexico City, Mexico
5—LIZMARK JR.
(4) 214, Mexico City, Mexico
6—SUPER CALO
(8) 195, Guadalajara, Mexico
7—TINIEBLAS JR.
(2) 219, Guadalajara, Mexico
8—SUPER ASTRO
(9) 223, Mexico City, Mexico
9—JERRY ESTRADA
(6) 220, Mexico City, Mexico
10—ULTIMO REBELDE
(10) 210, Coahuila, Mexico

Rätings . . . .

ANALYSIS

The injury bug bites WCW. It wasn't long ago that we were lamenting all the injuries befalling WWF superstars such as **Bret Hart**, **Shawn Michaels**, **Ahmed Johnson**, **Faarooq**, **Steve Austin**, **Ken Shamrock** ... the list went on and on and on.



Bret Hart

In recent months, WCW and the NWO have been hurt almost as much by injuries. **Kevin Nash** needed several months to recover from knee surgery and is just this month returning to our WCW top 10. **Syxx** has been out for several months following neck surgery, and his wrestling future seems to be in doubt. **Marcus "Buff" Bagwell** has bounced back well after his knee surgery, though he failed to earn a spot in the WCW ratings in this issue.

On WCW's side, **Raven's** name does not show up in the ratings, as he spent much of December battling an inflamed pancreas. **Bill Goldberg** needed more than a month to recover from a groin injury. **Ric Flair** injured his ankle during his World War III match with **Curt Hennig**, then aggravated the problem in an in-ring altercation with various members of the NWO in December. Thus **Dallas Page**, who has been battling rib and kidney problems for months, took his Starrcade match with Hennig.

Then there's **Alex Wright**, who disappeared from WCW TV shows and from our ratings in November. He returned to his native Germany after encountering some neurological problems. According to some reports, there is a chance he will need brain surgery.

Wrath (the former **Adam Bomb**), who had been struggling in singles competition in WCW, was told he'd need at least a month to recover from the broken collarbone and bruised sternum he suffered in an automobile accident in December.

And how long before **Perry Saturn** reinjures his surgically reconstructed left knee?

Good thing for WCW and the NWO that they have deep talent rosters, because there are plenty of talented wrestlers in those groups that have not made our ratings in this issue.

Wait ... ECW, too? **Shane Douglas**, the reigning ECW heavyweight champion, fails to make our overall Top 10 this time, because, like so many WCW stars, he is injured. He aggravated an elbow injury during his November to Remember match with **Bam Bam Bigelow** and needed surgery to repair it. Since he has not been defending his title, he hasn't earned his spot.

Shane Douglas

ECW TV champion **Taz** is thus the only ECW wrestler to make the overall Top 10. He dealt with various nagging injuries during the last few months of 1997, but he was still the federation's most consistent winner.

Three other ECW mainstays are once again in the ECW ratings this month, but they might be better off if they weren't. **Sabu** landed mouth-first on the leg of a table while attempting a moonsault on a card in Waltham, Massachusetts, in December. As a result, he was spitting out pieces of teeth as his match continued. He did take some time off, but he missed only two ECW cards and then was right back in the ring ready for more. What will have to happen to get this madman to take an extended break?

Tommy Dreamer ... well, he takes almost as much punishment as Sabu. He has been bothered by a badly injured heel since long before November to Remember, but he doesn't like taking time off, either. He courageously battled **Rob Van Dam** to a no-contest at that pay-per-view and has kept right on competing against stars such as Sabu and Taz. It's obvious, though, that he's having a hard time getting around at times.

Finally, there is **The Sandman**. He, too, is feuding with the likes of Van Dam and Sabu. He took quite a bit of time off this fall to let his ailing back heal, but he's back competing on a full-time basis again. Should he be? Obviously, he thinks so, and we hope for his sake that he's doing the right thing. □

That's all for this month. **If you have any questions or thoughts about all the injuries in wrestling right now, we want to hear from you. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o THE WRESTLER, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.**

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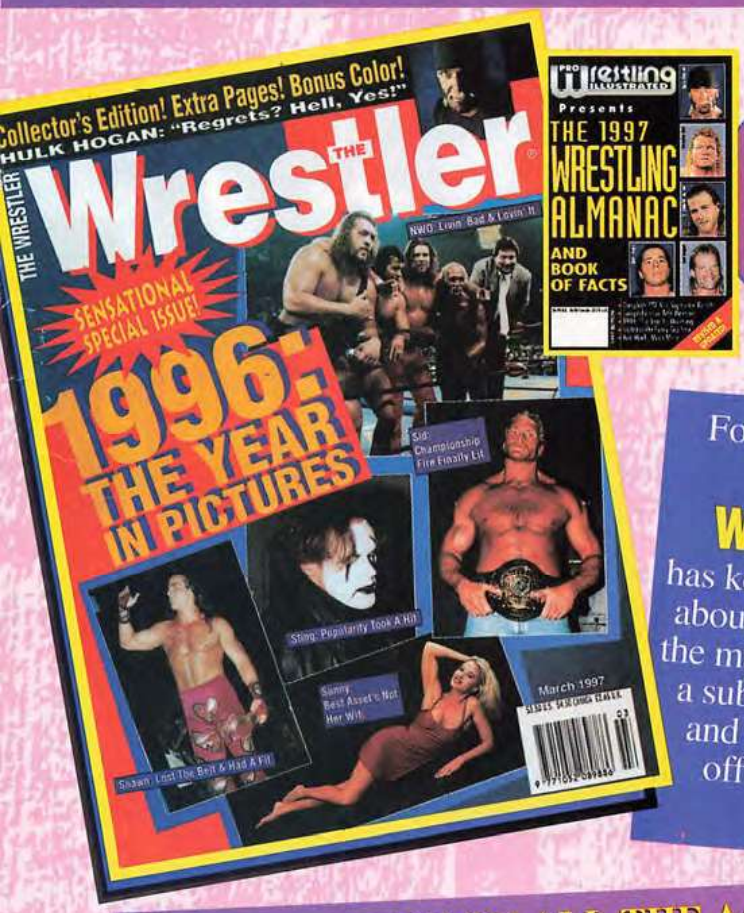

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